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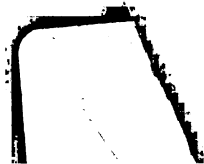
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ANGEL VISITS,
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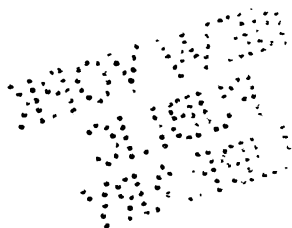
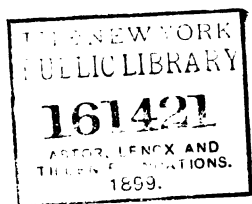
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PAUL'S WORK.

ANGEL VISITS, AND OTHER POEMS.

“ While I was musing the fire burned : then spake I with
my tongue.”—Ps. xxxix. 3



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ANGEL VISITS.

"Some have entertained Angels unawares."—HEB. xiii. 2.

THE POET'S LESSON.

"The disciple is not above his master."—LUKE vi. 40.

I.

A POET, on the sun slopes of Parnassus,
Sat breathing morning air ;
The earth lay hushed below, as half expecting
To hear him call her fair ;
And slowly veiling heaven, a sun-tinged cloudland
Stole upward unaware.

His soul just then no growing poem was nursing,
But lay at ease among
The soothing, swathing, somnolent enchantments
Which to bard-souls belong,—
The cadences still rippling on the lyre,
Between the bursts of song.

2

But presently he looked around, as seeking
 New themes for song to know ;
Then murmured, " Nothing new the sun lies under !
How long have beaches borne the wail and thunder
 Of ocean's ebb and flow ?
How long hath grass sprung yearly of that colour ?
 And the sunshine glittered so ?

" Still frost to frost, and summer unto summer,
 Respond as chime to chime ;
And men come forth in every generation,
 Like them of olden time ;
And earth, though new to youth, grows trite and weary,
 Ere life hath passed its prime.

" God from creation rests ; and droning Nature
 Plods round the old course still ;
Man never added to her powers, discover
 Or use them as he will ;
And therefore was the need of us, the Poets !
 The universe to fill
With things all new, and from this changeless actual,
 Our changing dreams distil."

Then he started to his feet, and shouted round him,
 “ Hark, world of men, draw near !
Just leave your work there, and come, stand and listen !
 For I can charm your ear ;
Stand all before me, on a lower level,
 That so ye better hear.

“ Our mother Nature's old, and can but croon ye
 The tales ye so well know,—
Those old tales ! of her goodness and her beauty,
 And her children's sin and woe.
Her gifts are old ; she never tries inventing,
But still those ancient love-gifts keeps presenting,
 God gave *her* long ago.

“ But if of these and of herself ye weary,
 I've fresh resource for you ;
If earth's perpetual green no more delights you,
 Nor heaven's eternal blue,
I'll use my best endeavours to repaint them,
 With some more novel hue ;
And making flowers and foliage wholly cover
All doleful things (as graves and ruins) over,
 Do up the world like new.

“ Or I will build a new world to your fancy,

Which has no kin to this,—

Planted right bravely with a fancy flora,—

Peopled with fairies, charming each adorer

With airy artifice.

Ha ! creation is the art of God and poets !

And 'tis the art of bliss.

“ My soul is glowing like a painted window,

With pictures and with hues ;

And yours are pale and blank as marble pave-stones ;

But mine shall yours suffuse ;

For I will let you have the sunshine through it,

And catch the tints it strews.”

And the happy said, “ We thank thee, but the sunshine

Seems brighter coming free :”

The busy—“ Thanks ! but we are called at present

By loud Reality ;

And if thy pictures happen to be prettier,

We cannot stay to see :”

Philosophers—“ We do not care for falsehoods,

For Truth is what we seek ;

But if, when we have found and fully learnt it,

Remains but half a week

Before our death, we'll sit and hear thee tell them,
 With minds at rest and meek :"
And the sad no sign of listening manifested ;
For bowed upon the earth their faces rested,
 And they had not heard him speak.

II.

That moment flew from heaven a white-winged angel,
 And took the earthward road ;
One of the errand staff, among the systems
 So often sent abroad ;
For are they not all ministering spirits
 To heaven-loved heirs of God ?

Down flew the angel, trailing out of glory
 A radiant glow of light,
Intense at first, but dimmer—growing dimmer—
 Through all his earthward flight ;
Until it just expired, and left him viewless,
 As earth appeared in sight.

None saw him to the poet's spirit sweeping,
To whom he softly whispered, "Wherefore weeping?"

And the poet made reply :

- "Men will not hearken when I seek to win them
From dull reality,
From fields of truth, to pleasaunces of beauty,
And hills of poesy."

In tones of angry sorrow spake the poet ;

But high above alarm,

The angel interposed between his outbursts,

A voice of holy calm ;

As if in pauses of an *agitato*

Were heard a quiet psalm.

III.

He said : " But who first fashioned Truth ?

Who made Reality ?

Has Beauty made a headstrong vow

To quit their company ?

Born sisters are they all, and God

Is Father to the three.

“ O Poet! all things real and true
 By God were hither brought ;
And durst thou, standing 'mid His works,
 Thyself the latest wrought,
Bid men love *thy* works more than His,
And set thy new-born fantasies
 O'er His eternal thought ?

“ Go, seek no beauties to create,
 While here they so abound ;
But follow God's creating steps
 The universe around,
With reverent, admiring ken ;
Then call to thee the world of men,
 And sing what thou hast found.

“ As on a dark and solemn lake,
Whence all their nourishment they take,
 The water-lilies peep,
And veil its depths with dreamy grace,—
So poesy floats upon the face
 Of Truth's eternal deep,
And opens shyly, bud by bud,
As sun-warmths penetrate the flood,
 Or heaven-breaths o'er it sweep.

“Go, seek it there ; but note the stems
Whereon the blossoms sway,
Deep rooted in the solid ground
Beneath their blooming play ;
For if, to make thyself a wreath,
Thou tear them thence away,—
Though men thine ornament may praise,
’Twill not survive the day.”

IV.

The Poet said, “I weave me other flowers
Than on those waters grew ;
For did I shew men no imagined beauty,
To add unto the true,
The world would be as full and fair without me,
Who gave it nothing new ;
And since truth groans already ’neath exponents,
I need not join their crew.

“If I depict the visible around me,
Which every eye can see,
How then do I excel a faithful painter ?
Nay, he excelleth me ;
For colour is of this a trustier witness
Than speech can ever be.

“ And if I pierce beyond the lovely surface,
Lo ! Science next I meet,
Explaining laws, attractions, causes, forces,
In terms exact and neat :
If still I press forth higher, deeper, wider,
Lo ! from her ancient seat

“ Starts, like an owl disturbed in outer twilight,
‘ Divine Philosophy ;’
Hooting at all intruders in derision,
Who dare to look where she alone hath vision :
And if again I try
To reach beyond, I touch the outer darkness
Of void Infinity.”

V.

“ Dark, but not void,—conclude thou not
That Truth finds limit here ;
Beyond that twilight's glooming bounds
She hath another sphere,
Though Science cannot see to read
The wonders lying there,
And to ‘ Divine Philosophy’
It doth not yet appear.

“ But in the poet’s soul there burns
 A heaven-enkindled light,
Which glimmers those wide scenes among ;
And though but as a small lamp hung
 In a vast fane at night,
A fragment here, an outline there,
A looming grandeur everywhere,
 It dimly brings to sight.

“ O Poet, who such light may hold !
 If new to men and thee
Appear the glimpses it reveals,
 Remember in thy glee,
To God and angels they were old
 When thou wert yet to be :—

“ If beautiful, ascribe it not
 To that poor lamp of thine,
By which they are not made, but shown ;
(For ’tis their beauties, not its own,
 That in its light forth-shine ;)
But give their true Creator praise,
 And laud His skill divine :—

“ If dim and broken, blame for that
 The faintness of its ray ;
And wait a better light to know
How glorious all it fails to show
 Will seem in full survey,—
What ecstasies the heart will stir
Of every kneeling worshipper
 Upon the break of day.”

VI.

“ O Mentor, spare thy powers and my weakness !
 ’Tis seldom I can reach
To lift my soul among yon lofty regions ;
 And dost thou sternly teach,
That I no dreamland of my own creating
May seek ? then while on simple Nature waiting,
 Permit me, I beseech,

“ To glorify her facts with my warm fancies ;
 Why, surely ’tis her gain,
If I supply her lips with lovely language
 That was not in her brain,
And animate her fair form with a spirit,
 To win more love from men.

“ I have been often in the woods in summer,
 Whose shaded emerald light
Was overstrewn with wavering flecks of sunshine,
 Shed from a world more bright ;
When the green, graceful boughs were not too jealous
 In holding heaven from sight.

“ No sound was heard there but of wind and foliage,
 In whispers scarcely caught ;
Or hurrying stream, its eager heart confessing,
As, cold to woods or flowers about it pressing,
 Its parent sea it sought ;
Or hidden fount, beneath the fern effusing,
Whence rose a murmur, like a voice of musing
 From Nature's inward thought.

“ And I have been where stand the eternal mountains
 In stern soliloquy—
Austere companions, never breaking silence—
 And by the endless sea,
Which seemed to swell and sigh with mighty secrets
 Too great to share with me.

“ Yet thus alone among the things of Nature,
Delivering all my soul
To forms and hues made mutually completer,
And sounds like silence solemn, only sweeter,
I've felt, beyond control,
As if they spoke, sublimely, if not clearly ;
And o'er my fancy stole

“ A dream that from their favour I was gleaning
Ideas and teaching, hints of beauteous meaning,—
As if they thought apart,
And I were but some humble wondering alien,
Who might not read their heart,
Yet sometimes privileged to hear a fragment
Of what they could impart.

“ Sometimes, when looking on a summer prospect,
With features fair and fine,
And steeped, perchance, in evening's tender lustre,
It seems a face benign ;
Which earnestly, with full and soft expression,
Looks mutely into mine.

“ And must I controvert the sweet illusion
 In wood, and hill, and sky,
And ne’er repeat what they have seemed to tell me,
 For love of verity ;
Because, though like a child I felt among them,
Unapt to learn their deep strains as they sung them,
 Or probe their mystery,

“ They were, in truth, but so much lovely matter,
 Blind, senseless, deaf and dumb,—
Could never learn a jot of all that converse
 In which my fancy swum,—
And I possessed the only soul among them,
 Whence all this thought had come ? ”

VII.

“ Didst thou ? Methinks this dream of thine
 Thou art so loath to shake,
Aust^{as} like a vision born of morn,
 - When sleep begins to break
Which see^{the} the truthful light of day,
 Too g^d reason to awake.

“ So listen !—listen !—in the woods,
 Upon the lone sea-shore,
Or 'midst the mountains,—thou wilt hear,
 What other men ignore,
Sweet parables of human things,
 And hints of something more.

“ For Nature speaks ; a thousand things
 Her thousand voices tell ;
All listening hearts the accents hear ;
But though it needs thy poet ear
 To catch the words as well,
It was not thou who taught her these,
 Or gave her tones their spell.

“ A Soul, who wears her as a form,
 Thinks inly all she saith ;
And though 'tis little thou canst glean,
Stray fragments, few and far between,
 Go write them down in faith ;
For thou art writing Truth, too true
 To hang upon thy breath.

B

“ And sometimes, when the light lies soft
On meadow, hill, and brook,
That Soul its features overflows,
And like a face the landscape glows.
If *thy* soul never shook
Beneath that mute appealing gaze,
Its frown be thy rebuke !
For many a one who did deny
His Lord, though standing thus so nigh,
Is heart-pierced by that look.”

VIII.

“ Yet once, O Angel ! and I yield the contest.
Not always am I free
To hold communion with the woods and mountains ;
And must I elsewhere be
A slave to husky facts, and dusky business ?
And never dreaming flee
To things less real, more lovely—love’s enchantments,
And beings love doth see ?”

These latter words were caught by human hearers,
And roused them to dispute.
“Why this,” exclaimed the young, “is real as business !
We need not thank thy lute
For that which is our life, or aspiration,—
Our nature's need, our being's occupation,
And would be, were it mute.”

“Fools !” laughed the old, “expecting all ye ask for,
And asking for the moon.
Romance to youth makes promises she pays not ;
Foretells what never comes ; or coming, stays not ;
Or staying, proves no boon.
No wonder ! these are dreams, unreal, and empty,
Morn shadows, gone at noon.
Romance deceives ; Experience teaches truly ;
She has her rod and foolscap for the unruly ;
We're fools no more ; we've learnt our lessons duly ;
And you must, late or soon.”

Then mourners spoke, with eyes that flashed with anger
And tears ; “Is love,” said they,
“An empty thing ? say rather *hearts* are empty,
Whence love hath passed away.

So empty, we of ours have often marvelled,
 We cannot smoothly fold
And lay them by, to make room in our spirits,
 For lust of power or gold :
But they were full too long ; and now have stiffened
 For ever to that mould.
If you could look within, you 'd see the impress
 Of that which they did hold.

“ Is love a dream because ye missed or lost it ?
 Why, 'tis the soul's life sap !
Which bleeding forth, the soul must sink in faintness,
 Or frigid death, mayhap.
Is nothing real to you but meat and mammon,
 Your ailments, and the shop ?
As if the summer were not real !—a season,
 And roses !—till they drop.

“ Mock-flowers indeed there be, of tinsel texture,
 And guiltless of perfume ;
But earth has gardens, rich with scent and colour,
 Or white with orchard bloom,
Of which a part brings fruit, if frost and maggot
 Are backward to consume.

“ And know *love* for a thing of earth, not dream-land,
By all its earthly banes,—
For a real rose, and not an artificial,
By the sharp thorny pains
It gives, if clasped too tight,—for a real summer,
By its wild thunder rains ! ”

“ Ha ! ” cried the poet, “ now by your own showing,
Your ‘ real ’ I should not prize :
Your real love bleeds ; real summer rains and thunders ;
Your real rose pricks and dies ;
On all sides flecks and flaws and faults and failures
Torment the poet’s eyes :
And Truth is sad ; if he should touch her harp-strings,
A mournful chord replies :
Since only in his dreams he finds perfection,
What wonder if he flies

“ From this abortive ‘ real ’ to bright ideals,
His mighty thirst to still
With faultless, deathless love, and bliss, and beauty,—
With fruits that aye fulfil
The blossoms’ promise,—with transcendent beings,—
Which he creates at will ?
Yea, I will stay my cheated soul with figments,
Since Truth keeps faith so ill ”

IX.

“O Poet ! how can that be truth,
Which of its promise fails ?

Yea, seek ideals ; in them alone

The pure first truth prevails
Against disorders and defects,

Which man's dread fall entails
Upon himself and on the earth,
And God in heaven bewails.

“Ideal things did God prepare,—
Ideal beings, pure and fair,

His image undefaced ;
The intellect profound and clear,
The conscience quick and chaste,
The heart intense and large, the form
With perfect beauty graced :—

“Ideal love, which such might know,—

The clasp of soul on soul,
Two fellow-halves that fitly meet,
And, welded by a fervent heat,
Form one cohesive whole ;
Two hearts in action, yet at rest,
Each finding in the other breast
Its earthly home and goal :—

“ Ideal bliss,—no feverish dream,
But just the normal state
Of souls beneath the smile of God,
Where all is true and straight,
All powers in healthful exercise,
All wishes pure and sate.

“ If thou hast quicken'd inner sense
To feel that such things were,
And wit to guess them from the forms
Which do but mock them here,
And foresight to behold the time
When they shall reappear,

“ Then hast thou no creation wrought,
But (what is higher gain,)
Enjoyed a nearer, clearer view
Than common eyes attain,
Of things that once were made by God,
And now are marred by men.

“ Yet is no object for thy scorn
The sunk world as it lies;
The ruin and the wilderness
Thine artist eye may prize,

Nor the wild glories of the storm
 And storm-lit cloud despise ;
The mournful minor 'neath thy touch
 May yield sweet harmonies ;
The chord that in Creation's choir
Bears, charged with doubt and sad desire,
 The Ah of human sighs,
Resolved by angels, gives Amen,
 Completed in the skies.

“ But still in God's ideas believe ;
Didst thou presume thou couldst conceive •
 Of fairer types than He ?
Then know, 'tis not accomplished yet ;
 The reals of His decree
As far transcend thy best ideals,
 As these the reals that be.

“ Ah ! well the young, when they arrive
 From His creating hand,
With all the instincts warm within
 That were for Eden planned,
May seek the flowers of Paradise
 On earth's unfertile sand,
And look with wistful wandering eyes
 All up and down the land

“For what unscathed they seldom find,
Till with their search and tears half-blind,

 Their straining vision aches ;
And presently, with sight grown dim,
They sigh, ‘ We were but in a dream,
 From whence experience wakes.
We’re old, and therefore wise ; but youth
Still sets at nought the sombre truth,
 For those same bright mistakes !’

• “Alas, and yet the truth of heaven
 Was in those early dreams !
What man was born for, quick hearts feel ;
But what born to, slow years reveal ;
And if that primal sense they steal,
 Then, Poet ! as beseems
Thy heavenly mission, to him go,
And to his heart the glory show,
 It darkly disesteems.

“For thou wilt keep it in thy sight ;
Thy soul, if worthy, may be bright
 With splendours far away,—

Aloft and pure, as mountain snow,
May catch the roseate after-glow
Of Eden's buried day,
And hold it up before the vales,
Which long are sunk in gray.

"Take heart, O Earth! yon lovely light
No final farewell cries;
Roll on; thou wilt not roll away,
A wandering planet, lost for aye
In black and empty skies;
But by a sure force swiftly drawn,
Will soon roll round into the morn
Thy changeless Sun supplies;
And poet souls, like kindling peaks,
Announce Him ere He rise!"

X.

"O Angel, who for these things is sufficient?
Thou didst my boasting chide
When I set forth myself, and my ideas;
And now wouldst stir my pride
To aim at reading God's, and setting *them* forth,
Which I had left untried."

XL

“ Yea, priest to thine own soul to be,
 Was all thy meagre aim,—
To men its beauties half unshroud,
And beckoning to the eager crowd,
Stand muffled in an incense cloud,
And see them kneel with faces bowed,
 In homage to its name ;
But God appoints thee service higher,
For He this worship doth require,
 And will thy priesthood claim.

“ His poems,—the wondrous universe,
 The tender human heart,
The mystic songs, by Nature sung,—
Lie hidden in a heavenly tongue ;
 Which He will teach apart
To thee ; for He bespeaks thy pen,
To render into words of men
 These products of His art.

“So thou must con them line by line,
With reverent love of each.
Give over making more ; 'twill need
Thy finest feeling, closest heed,
The sense divine to reach,—
Thy highest skill and taste, to clothe
The same in fitting speech.

“Nay, this will far thy skill transcend ;
The whole thou wilt not comprehend,
Far less translate them through :
Translators since the world began
Have wrought with zeal as true ;
And here and there they seize a thought,
But all the grand ideas so caught
As yet are only few

“But these are truths, eternal truths,
Bright, fixed,—as stars on high ;
While earthly actual things below,
Like road-side lamps, though useful now,
Are broken by and by ;
And human dreams, like marsh-light's dance,
Lead into bogs, and die.

“So with thine office be content ;
To give earth music art thou sent,
 Already given higher,—
To lead forth unknown melodies,—
To strike unlooked-for harmonies ;
 And if to hear thy lyre,
Thou wouldst a wondering audience draw,
 Whose hearing ne’er shall tire,—
Usurp not the Composer’s right,
But as performer, to unite
 Thy soul with His, aspire,
In rapturous trembling sympathy,
Enabling thee imperfectly
 Upon the quivering wire
His high conceptions to express,
His pathos, power, and tenderness,—
 While all the world admire.

“And as the union closer draws,
Thou’lt own Him the exciting cause
 Of every throbbing note ;
Thy soul, more vibrant to His own,
More impotent, when left alone,
 To set a sound afloat,—

More helpless to restrain the gush
Of melodies which through it rush,
When by His Spirit smote,

“ Will feel itself an instrument,
Whereon He plays at will,—
A flute, itself of sound devoid,
But sometimes lifted and employed ;
And when His breathings fill,
His fingers touch it, strains divine
Bear witness to His skill ;
The instrument can nothing do,
But let the heavenly music through,
And with its passage thrill.”

XII.

The angel ceased ; and viewless as in coming
Went home through cloudless air ;
The silent poet sent his soul up after,
In ecstasy and prayer ;
And overflowing heaven and earth, a glory
Lay round him everywhere.

SPES SUPER SIDERA.

"When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained ; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him ?"—Ps. viii. 3, 4.

No soul responded to my own ;
Amid the universe unknown,
My empty heart was all alone.

I looked abroad into the night :
Though on the earth there was no light,
High up the pale stars glistened bright.

So still, so pure, so far were they,
Affection rose a little way ;
Then it turned chill, and fell in spray.

An Angel sought my soul to move ;
He whispered, " Lift thine eyes above ;
The God of stars demands thy love ! "

Then through my frame there went a chill ;
Their beauty might my vision fill ;
My heart lay very cold and still.

I said, " They are so far above,
I cannot touch them with my love,
Much less, then, Him who made them move.

" For there no more His glory dwells,
Than ocean in the tiny cells
Of all its million million shells.

" He showered them out before His face,
Like diamond dust upon the Space
Which forms His lonely dwelling-place.

" And if I fly beyond their light,
I shall but pierce the empty night ;
For He will never come in sight."

The angel answered, " Their desire
Is toward the Viewless dwelling higher ;
'Twas from His glory's central fire,

“He scattered forth those burning coals ;
And every orb in yonder shoals
Is girded with a mist of souls.

“These have like passions with thine own ;
To God are all the systems known ;
So Earth nor thou art quite alone.”

“I saw the light of eve,” I said,
“Upon a fleecy cloud displayed,
Which was of myriad mist-drops made.

“I marked its outline, fringed with gold,
And watched how grew its margin cold,
As from the glowing west it roll’d

“But as I looked, I did not dream
Of all those drops of watery steam ;
For *one*, not *many*, did it seem.

“So must the universe to Him,
Whose hand hath spanned its utmost rim,
As far as stars on darkness swim.

" Their shining ranks around Him crowd ;
He views them but as one bright cloud,—
A robe His person to enshroud.

" But who shall note the tide of life,
Of art, opinion, business, strife,
Wherewith each atom world is rife ?

" The fights of power, the aspect strange
Of tyranny's and freedom's range,
Of nations' wondrous growth and change ?

" And who shall judging record make
Of lonely souls that yearn and ache,
Of heads that droop, of hearts that break ?

" I've seen hope perish in the bud,
And burning tears rush down like blood,
When torn hearts weep their vital flood.

" I look up to the midnight sky
For God, and myriad worlds espy,
Which intercept from this His eye,—

“ Then through the glass which shews where shine
More myriads, which that eye Divine
May see, though too remote for mine ;

“ And by their chilly gleam, I swear,
That what I find the heavens declare,
Is but this verdict of despair,—

“ ‘ Poor souls ! your feeble plaint is drowned
In the perpetual murmured sound,
That riseth from Creation round.

“ ‘ God hath no leisure for your tale ;
Go pour it out upon the gale !
There is an answer in its wail.’ ”

“ Fool ! ” cried the angel, “ cast thine eye
On yon field flower, whose petals lie,
Arranged in perfect symmetry,

“ Combining in a figure true,
And tinted with a faultless hue ;
Didst thou design it thus ? or who ?

“Or study thine own outward shell,—
The cords which know thy pull so well,
The wires which instant tidings tell,

“The instrument of melody,
The lenses which make earth and sky
Upon thy spirit pictured lie,—

“That spirit too, an aggregate
Of mechanisms intricate,
With action more elaborate.

“Dost e'en thyself the fountains know,
Whence wells up thought's deep tranquil flow,
Or geyser jets of joy and woe?

“Canst shew this matter void of doubt,
How o'er the face the soul walks out,
Leaving such footsteps thereabout?

“A marvel thou in every part,
Yet sorrow well may fill thy heart,
For how should God know what thou art?

“Lift now thine eyes and look around,
How beings like thyself abound,
How flowers and verdure clothe the ground,—

“Then through the glass, which shews how fine
An eye and touch hath traced each line
Of fairy things, too small for thine.

“The azure lakes are still and bright ;
The streams, from every pine-clad height,
Descend like silvery threads of light ;

“Upward the silent peaks aspire ;
The eve floods earth with golden fire,
As if to heaven it brought her nigher.

“With beauty Nature’s heart is wild ;
She deems herself the great One’s child ;
Alas ! her filial thought beguiled !

“Alas ! that God should dwell too far
To catch the glimmer of the star,
Whereon these many wonders are !”

“Thou angel, mock me not !” I cried,
“Thou bring’st no light on either side ;
And I am sad, thou must not chide.

“I grant that an Almighty mind
The worlds in wisdom first designed,
With wreaths of beauty round them twined.

“But thence, perchance, ’twas Nature’s hand,
Which spun these myriads, band by band,
All on the models God had planned.

“He framed a vast machine of laws,
And having touched the starting cause,
It moved, and since hath made no pause.

“For part works part, as He foresaw,
And wheel turns wheel, and law bids law ;
Though He should utterly withdraw.

“Effect and cause each other chase ;
And growth and waste keep measured pace,
Perpetual motions running race.

“But He perchance hath turned away
Since the great scheme began to play ;
No need to watch it on its way.

“He could have nothing to amend,
Who, knowing whither all should tend,
From the beginning saw the end.

“His hand set beating Nature’s heart,
Whence all the vital currents start,
Whose pulses throb through every part.

“Her powers bring forth new life profuse ;
And still produce and reproduce
The patterns God had first in use.

“When Spring her garland hath combined,
She never with its bloom entwined
A fair new blossom, just designed !

“Still buttercups are urns of gold ;
Still daisies pale or flushed unfold ;
Like those our fathers loved of old.

“Still in the woods are song-birds nursed ;
Still from their bounds the young fawns burst ;
As sunny Eden saw them first.

“Was Eden Nature’s birthplace then ?
Or but a late link in the chain,
To seek whose starting point were vain,

“Depending whence, no eye can trace,
Through the thick darkness round the place
Where dwelleth God, with hidden face ?

“Though here young Science interpose,
In haste her knowledge to disclose,
Most proud of what she latest knows,—

“And shew new species breaking in,
Among the older not akin,
Which law, she says, ne’er bade begin,—

“Yet Nature, sitting mute the while,
With grand reserve and quiet smile,
Seems thinking, ‘Let her thus beguile

“ ‘ Her ignorance. She guesses well.
Among my records she may spell ;
She cannot yet my secrets tell.

“ ‘ Not yet hath she the veil withdrawn
From my first doings, in the morn
Of ages, long ere she was born.’

“ And I may dream, that could she read
The whole, she might discern a thread,
From type to type connecting lead,—

“ Nay more, from world to world, whereby
From matter of the old that die,
New stars break forth to stud the sky.

“ So, till the grind-wheel cease to turn,
Fresh sparks may ever rise and burn,
And back into the dark return.

“ But God no count nor watch need keep :
I only know He seems to sleep,
While all His unknown children weep.”

chain.

This answer then the angel made,—
“ If things should be as thou hast said,
With all thy care thou hast not paid

“ The scheme its dues. If that machine
Work so precisely as foreseen,
His eye on every point hath been,

“ Foreseeing, not each type alone,
But each new unit got and grown,
And each new seed matured and sown ;

“ To guard that nowhere 'midst them lurk
Some grain of ill, to jar and jerk,
And spoil the whole, when set to work,—

“ Or should such evil entrance find,
Its workings to His service bind,
And make it further show His mind.

“ Then nought is to its type so true,
As not to show some feature new,
To make it special in His view.

“ So every individual man,
And plant, and insect, in His plan,
Hath shared His thought ere worlds began.

“ To Him was every being known,
Before it could a being own,
When self-involved He dwelt alone,

“ Companioned but by schemes sublime,
Before Creation’s morning prime,
Before the birth of eldest Time.

“ But ’twould avail thee not to know
He loved thy world so long ago,
Or e’en thyself, if thou couldst show

“ That He neglected and forgot,
When it had gained existence, what
He knew when it existed not.

“ One after one, thought’s motley train
Goes filing through thy groove-like brain,
Length without breadth,—a line-like chain.

"And canst thou hope to comprehend
How thought and love of God extend,
From right to left, and end to end ?

"Synoptically in His eye,
Past, present, future, equal lie ;
Nought is to come, and nought gone by.

"His thoughts can never turn away ;
Once known to Him is known to-day ;
Once loved by Him is loved for aye."

"At least," I said, "thy reasons teach,
If to all worlds His love doth reach,
How small a fraction falls to each."

In grief the angel said to me,
"The human heart beats loud in thee,
With all its strange perversity.

"One thou canst love with soul and might ;
Canst mete the length, and depth, and height,
Of love which God calls Infinite ?

“Divide Infinity ; thou’lt see,
Whatever the divisor be,
The quotient is Infinity.

“To thee the sun appeared to roam
To-day, across the azure dome,
Which bounds the horizon round thy home.

“His lustre through each casement strayed,
On every tiny pool it played,
And gave each leaf its light and shade.

“But yet, meanwhile, in some far land,
That sun another circle spanned,
Which bounded there a world of sand.

“And elsewhere still, from bound to bound,
He passed across an ocean round,
And every wave with silver crowned.

“So half o’er earth his lustre streamed,
While at each range of sight it seemed
As if ’twas only there he beamed.

“ And nought escaped his burning eye ;
Each leaf, and drop, and flower, and fly,
Received his whole intensity.

“ E'en so, His glowing love doth God
In full to every world afford,
Minutely keen and largely broad :

“ And while each globe's horizon line
Would seem His glory to confine,
The universe beholds Him shine ;

“ And shines back starry in His sight,
As shines a dewy field, made bright
By giving back the sun his light.

“ Now say, could one small dewdrop wear
Of that broad light a larger share,
If none of all the rest were there ?”

“ Yet one,” I said, “ might be withdrawn,
With the one sunbeam it had worn ;
Thou wouldst not feel that light was gone.

"A leaf may flutter from the bough ;
Thou wilt not say, 'The forest's brow
Hath somewhat less of greenness now.'

"A wavelet bursts, and is no more ;
No tone is lost from ocean's roar,
Nor dies the murmur on the shore.

"And earth the universe might leave ;
Nor God the little void perceive
In His great heart ; yet still I grieve

"That what our fond eyes seem to prove
As wide beneath as heaven above,
Should be so needless to His love."

The angel said, "Thy words are vain ;
Take from completeness but a grain,
And incompleteness will remain.

"Thou wouldst not miss an absent note
In those unmeasured strains that float
From many a spring-bird's random throat.

“ But soul-made music works not so ;
A moment's halting in the flow
Would flaw an oratorio.

“ And what is Nature's vast accord ?
An Oratorio to God,
Whereof He knows each phrase and chord.

“ In that great music of the spheres,
For ever sounding in His ears,
Each planet as a note appears.

“ He listens to their pleasant song,
Filling all space, eternal long,
One absent note would make it wrong ;—

“ Would dash the meaning from some bar ;
Or chord make weak ; or climax mar ;
Or cadence leave irregular.

“ And must not the Composer's ear
Be doubly sensitive to hear
That all are sounding true and clear ?

“ What matter if thou canst not tell
Which strain thy world was bid to swell ?
His soul knows all the music well.

“ What matter if thou canst not see
Creation’s mighty symmetry ?
That temple was not built for thee.

“ Go, nor desire to quench the light
Of heaven’s unnumbered lamps in night,
That one may seem to shine more bright ;

“ But lift thine eyes in thankfulness
That God such countless worlds should bless ;
For, though they be so numberless,

“ I know a tale which proves the cost
Which He will rather should exhaust
His mines, than let e’en *one* be lost.”

And while I listening did remain,
The angel paused, then spake again,
In softer tones and sweeter strain,

Sounding my stormy billows o'er,
Like far church-music from the shore,
I had not hoped to land on more.

"The Son of God looks forth on space,
Whose starry eyes all seek His face ;
But one seems trembling in its place.

"His unbeginning history
Which never finishing shall be,
A line which metes eternity,

"By all the universe unbent,
With that world's tale is strangely blent,
By it is broken with event !

"Strange light, strange shadow, mark its ray ;
Intently doth He look that way ;
Ah ! He remembers many a day

When He among its vineyards strayed,
Or sat beneath its palm-trees' shade,
Or on its lonely mountains prayed.

“ How high seemed heaven above Him there !
Yet were its flowers and meadows fair,
And sweet as love its summer air.

“ But 'twas not this, it was its moan
Which drew Him from Creation's throne,
To wander to that world alone.

“ He found it running o'er with tears,
Blighted with sin, and wan with fears,
A darkened spot among the spheres.

“ Nought was it worth, condemned for vice ;
He poured His blood in sacrifice,
And counts its value by its price.

“ There suffering He made His own ;
A mournful secret ! all unknown,
Save 'twixt that world and Him alone.

“ He bore the griefs its children bore ;
Their tears He shed, their smiles He wore ;
Their form is His till time is o'er.

“ The worlds to Him their anthems raise ;
The heavens reverberate His praise ;
But, 'mid Creation's choral lays,

“ A faint pathetic strain He hears,
Borne from the race of griefs and fears,
Whose lifted eyes are full of tears ;—

“ ‘ Saviour ! by all the pain and woe
Which Thy still human heart could know,
While sojourning with us below,

“ ‘ By fierce temptation's vanquished call,
By those kind tears which wept our fall,
Good Lord, deliver us from all !

“ ‘ By agonies in secret borne,
By Thy shed blood and death of scorn,
By the third morning's rosy dawn,

“ ‘ By Thy release from death's dark sway,
And bright ascent to heavenly day,
Good Lord, deliver us, we pray ! ’

“ When is a pleading voice so sure,
As when it cries, ‘ Physician, cure
The anguish Thou didst once endure ?’

“ The clustering worlds His voice obey,
And own His kind protecting sway ;
He loves them as a Father may ;

“ But which of all the children round
A parent, with such love is crowned,
As he who, lately lost, is found ?

“ And which is with such fondness pressed,
As he who lies with sobs distressed,
Forgiven, on his father’s breast ?

“ Which sheep, of all that know His voice,
So makes the Shepherd’s heart rejoice,
As that which once made foolish choice,

“ That silly thing which went astray
From the safe fold, and, far away,
With cold and hunger dying lay,—

“ Which cost Him such a weary quest,
Such bleeding feet, such pains unguessed,
Before He brought it home to rest,

“ Borne in His arms, with tender art ?
The others in His care have part,
But none have lain so near His heart.

“ He bringeth out yon numbered host,
The nearest and the farthestmost,
And tells their names,—not one is lost.

“ But who may say with what fond grace
His eye, amid the star-strewn space,
Seeks out His Church’s dwelling-place ?

“ Which of the sprinkled lights, so bright
To one who, dwelling on a height,
Looks down upon a town at night,

“ Hath he so eagerly descried,
As that which shews where doth abide,
’Neath some low roof, his plighted bride ?”

Then ran warm rivers from mine eye ;
I said, " Such knowledge is too high ;
I cannot further make reply."

And he—" At last then have I shown
Thy world is to its Maker known ?
Lo ! every heart in every zone,

" Each falling bird, each tear-drop shed,
And every hair of every head,
He knows, and marks, and counts, He said.

" He from the Heaven of heavens can see
Thine almost stumbling soul ; and He
Hath given me charge concerning thee,

" To bear thee up o'er every stone,
Thy wingless foot might dash upon,
Till thou shalt know as thou art known ;

" Where, in the secret of His breast,
A million million souls shall rest,
Each utterly beloved and blest."

The angel passed, I knew not how ;
Upon the earth was laid my brow.
My heart is full of gladness now !

A BLIND MAN'S REVERIE.

“Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon.”—2 Cor. v. 4.

I.

THEY say the sun hath backward rolled
The earth-enshrouding pall of night ;
The east hath veiled its blue in gold ;
And morn hath hid her star in light.

The mist is opened curtain-wise,
For entrance of the golden ray ;
There is but warmth upon mine eyes ;
Upon all other eyes is Day.

They say the woodman seeks his hearth,
About the limes sport insect swarms ;
And out of day's blue ebbing bath,
The pale stars slowly lift their forms.

But I abide in changeless night,
Without a beacon in the gloom ;
Who found a joy in flooding light,
In forests' green, in wild-flowers' bloom !
Will any dawn appear in sight,
Beneath the archway of the tomb ?

II.

O bright wild flowers ! my childhood's play !
O star, and spike, and cup, and bell !
When last I saw ye fade away,
I deemed it not our last farewell.

The waterfall, a ghost in white,
Amid the sunset-coloured glen,
Bore many sere leaves out of sight ;
I said, " Your like will bud again."

Still swifter—swifter—eve's light fled ;
Still slower—slower—broke the morn ;
And ere again they cross-wise sped,
This darkness over me was drawn.

Ah flowers ! ye are but odours now ;
A shapeless whisper is the glen ;
The waterfall is one long woe,
Lamenting through my heart and brain.

III.

In days that came, but now are gone,
There was a broad bright floor of green ;
And beauty held her sport thereon,
But underneath it nought was seen.

There was an awning stretching o'er,
Of lucid, yet impervious blue ;
It dropped its edges on the floor,
And had no rent for gazing through.

Between them, though the place was bright,
My spirit chafed to be confined ;
For all that awning teemed with light,
As if some glory shone behind.

Now tent and floor have left me free,
And should the Infinite reveal ;—
Alas ! no glory can I see ;
What was it that they did conceal ?

I seem to stand in some lone place,
Where all the worlds are out of sight,
Ingulfed in vacant depths of space ;
But vacant space is starless night.

O God ! is such the happy scene,
Where come the spirits unconfined,
In hope a brighter home to win,
Than poor sad earth was, left behind,—

And find that sensuous light they lose,
Though memory on the dark may paint
Bright images of forms and hues,
That every century grow more faint ?

Nay, where no worlds are, is no sound ;
And souls lack ear as well as eye ;
Awake in dark and hush profound,
From pulseless age to age they lie ;
No chimes to mark how years wear round ;
And not an insect humming by.

Then better far, through noonday's heat
To tend the vines, or plough the mead,
With earth's wild flowers about the feet,
And that unlifted veil o'erhead.

IV.

Were they but brain-begotten dreams,
The distant hills that haunt me yet,
The sun that ran in molten streams
All down their faces, when he set ?

I worshipped beauty in that time ;
My soul sat mostly in mine eyes,
And fed upon the looks sublime,
Of woods and vales, and streams and skies.

Now muse I o'er eternal laws ;
In lonely shades I sit apart ;
And trace the clue from cause to cause,
And cast a plumb-line in the heart.

Still rise in memory, far away,
The purple mountains streaked with streams,
The valleys bright with flowers of May,
And glistening in the light of dreams.

Alas ! alas ! if these were all !
But suddenly remembered eyes
Their immaterial beam let fall,
And Nature's various colour dies.

So flicker memories in my mind ;
As to the miner on his way
Through darkness, when he looks behind,
The shadows at the entrance play,
Of shifting leaves in sun and wind,
And show an outer world of day.

I grope along the darkening wall,
And leave afar the lessening light ;
Still farther down the path to crawl,
And not to be released till night.

And then, as from my narrow dark
I go, and in the wide Dark range,
Save that I find no wall or mark,
Say, not much change ? ay, not much change.

V.

My soul is plaining at my speech,
“ Not change ? ” she saith in dim surprise,
“ Lo ! better change I look to reach,
Than were the opening of thine eyes.

“ When God first formed and breathed thee man,
He said, ‘ Not yet is this complete ;
These divers parts, to reach my plan,
Must find more fitly how to meet.

“ ‘ First, while the body learns to be,
In its own world of light and sound,
A nimble minister to thee,
Thou must, O soul, be helpless bound,—

“ ‘ Imprisoned in its care must lie,
And live but as it can prepare ;
For nought but comes through ear and eye,
Or some like gate, can reach thee there.

“ ‘ Yet buried spirit, rest in hope !
Until the hour that sets thee free,
To find thy sphere, and use thy scope,
While rests the flesh in hope for thee.’

“ So if He will, that part by part
Thy nature shall its nature learn,
I ask not why the flesh has start,
But bide my time and wait my turn,
Beguiled with all its curious art,
Which tells me of the earth and sun.

“Yet—yet—sometimes, from my own sphere,
Such hints to *me* have pierced this screen,
Such beckoning signs through eye and ear,
From what they have not heard or seen,—

“Sometimes, so meaning seemed the glance
Of some deep star, from far away,—
So beaming Nature’s countenance,
With something which she did not say,—

“Sometimes, in ocean’s undertones,
Or with soft music interwound,
Or in the midnight’s windy moans,
So seems to hide what is not sound,—

“That, wondering if sound or light
Can anything for *me* intend,
I long to read all meanings right,
When light, and sound, and touch shall end.

“I cannot reach my sister souls ;
I saw them at their windows lean,
And signal to me from the walls,
They might not bid me come within.

“The telegraphs we have employed
Do nought but briefest hints convey ;
And winged thoughts, sent across the void,
Have always died, or lost their way.

“And love—ah, powerless thing as sweet !—
Before those walls it pours its strain,
With endless, passionate repeat,
To quick time which the heart doth beat ;
And to the dear one they contain,
It seems like singing in the street,
Or like the cadence of the rain.

“But when I meet a kindred soul,
In our own world, with unsheathed touch,
I'll print my thoughts upon it whole,
And make it feel my fire as such.

“For I shall know, to sense unproved,
'Mid all the shadowy life that teems
In that abyss, the ghosts beloved,
Who thither fled beyond my dreams.

“Full intercourse will then commence,
This insulating flesh has cut ;
And I shall lift soft valves of sense,
Which now the body presses shut.

“ Ah, what a world will they reveal !

The world which has no sky or ground ;
Nay, shall I not on all sides feel
The Spirit that enfolds me round ?—

“ And know at once the things He said
In sunlit morns and starlit eves,
In scents from thyme or violet bed,
In vernal songs among the leaves ?—

“ Become, without such medium, 'ware
Of all I felt obscurely dear
In nature once, content to spare
The forms which vaguely showed them here ?—

“ Be flooded with His bliss and love,
In some deep drowning sympathy,
And with His mighty motions move,
As moves a sea-weed with the sea ?

“ What will I ? Dark the outer mist ;
I see but my own firelight low,
Whose flickering flashes have not kissed
The night surrounding into glow ;
I cannot guess the thing I list,
But I am tired, and I would go.

“ Earth holds me by the garment fast ;
And since I cannot wrench it free,
I should not grudge its loss at last,
To leave it in her hands, and flee.

“ So change—change on ! until shall cease
The dim desire for something more ;
For not in this life comes the peace
Whose fulness tells that change is o'er.”

VI.

Amen, my soul ! soon face to face,
In thine unguessed-of home thou 'lt be,
With that ineffable embrace,
And every ghostly mystery ;
And sailing worlds, and deepest space,
Will have no cognizance of thee.

Yet when thy powers about thee strain,
In that strange realm where thou art tossed,
Discovering thy varied gain,
I ween that thou for something lost

Wilt feel, and feel, and in its stead
Grasp faith and hope, and bid them stay ;
Still casting dim desires ahead,
And 'Not in *this* life,' thou wilt say.

When crowding souls, before—behind,
Felt only by the press of thought,
Its webs about thee weave and wind,
With lines of reasoning crossed and caught,—

'Mid truth's unveiling harmonies,
And things unseen grown evident,—
'Mid unimagined ecstasies,—
A kind of painless discontent

May stir within, confessed to none,
An errant fancy whisper thee,
How pleasant just a glint of sun,
Or just a chirp of birds, would be !

Ah ! will not, too, some longing rise,
To see the glory of the hills,
The flush of eve on western skies,
The moonlight gleam on seas and rills ?—

To hear the woodland chorus sing,—
To know by fragrance violets blown,—
To feel the gladdening breath of spring ?
There will ! and when, instead, thou'rt shown

The Heart which caused all these to be,
Thou'lt say, ' Yea, God, Thy love is sure,
However told ; yet tell it me
In that sweet language as before !'

When thy beloved ones, mourned below,
With love unchanged, about thee throng,
And by some thrilling contact show
The meeting come, desired so long,

A hope deferred may rush between—
An olden longing grow acute—
For those sweet features, still unseen,
And those soft cadenced tones, still mute !

Peace, soul ! let thought and wish be drowned
In worship, when it comes to this ;
Lest some guard angel, on his round,
Should find thee sighing in thy bliss.

If thou wilt flee the winter here,
That wide dim sea must claim thy flight,
Ere any shining cliffs appear,
To show a summer land in sight.

VII.

My soul replies : " It yet may be,
That more is in my thought than I
Have traced ; for if unvalled and free
Hereafter, I surrounded lie

" With primal all-conceiving Mind,
Its images may shine on me,
And I a world about me find
Of seeming sound and scenery.

" As in mesmeric dream, 'tis said,
One spirit from another may
Receive impressions, passive led
'Mid scenes to which it shows the way,

" So I through Him, but not with eyes,
May see material things—green trees,
Blue lakes, white mountains, rosy skies,
Sweet faces,—ay, and more than these !

“ If this shall be, and if it seem
Withdrawn and shifted like a show,
Or constant,—a fantastic dream,
Or real,—I know not ; need I know ?”

VIII.

My soul and I are not alone ;
Our colloquy is overheard ;
An angel makes his presence known,
By striking in a voiceless word.

He says: “ I come with eager speed,
To answer that appeal, just made
To some guard angel. Heaven took heed
Of all thy soul and thou have said :

“ And thine own guardian angel, I,
Who watch for thee the Father's face,
There read that I should hither fly
At once, with counsel for thy case

“ For though thy soul, in flesh enclosed,
Not yet perceives Him, He is nigh ;
And she, with all her thoughts exposed,
Lies open to His piercing eye.

“ And though so firmly she avers
That but through narrow gates of sense
She in this world gets news of hers,
’Tis less so than it seems. From thence

“ I come, by eye, ear, touch, unkenn’d ;
And with herself communing straight,
I teach her, not to comprehend
The ghostly secrets that await
Her change, but whither change shall tend,
And what shall be her crowning fate.

“ Of course, each lacks its complement,
When spirit is from form exiled :
Why, God himself was not content,
Till at His call Creation smiled !

IX.

“ The churchyard marbles will not quake,
The churchyard daisies will not wave,
The turfy surface will not break,
When sinks a soul in every grave,

“To find the flesh, there laid asleep,
Or that which waiteth in its stead,
And thrill it with a whisper deep,—
‘Awake ! awake ! the time is fled.

“Behold ! ’tis I ! returned once more.
The Master comes and calls for thee ;
So I ran swiftly on before,
To rouse and bring thee back with me.

“Arise, and meet Him in the air,
The Centre of all mysteries,
Who with thy likeness slumbered here,
That thou to-day mightst wake with His.

“I shall not leave thee thus again,
But take thee with me where I will ;
For thou wilt now my pace attain,
And all my impulses fulfil.

“But mark !—henceforward I shall read
The spirit-world with vision free ;
And thence shall have no further need
Of rumours second-hand from thee.

“ ‘ Yet when too close becomes the hold
Of deeper things which there I prove,
Thou still may'st charm me as of old,
With songs and pictures that I love.

“ ‘ And thou may'st tell me, o'er and o'er,
Whate'er thou wilt of thine own land ;
But bring those halting tales no more,
Of what thou canst not understand.' ”

“ Then, meeting in a close embrace,
Shall form and spirit reunite ;
And as each sense resumes its place,
The first sensation that shall smite

“ The thrilling soul, will be a call,
‘ Come forth ! ’ while through an opening rent,
Light glitters down the grave's dank wall,
And bright-hued flowers look in, down bent.

“ For then the churchyard trees will quake,
The marbles show a gaping span,
The turfy earth on all sides break,—
And from the grave will rise the Man !

“ Who, looking up, ere yet the skies,
Or glorious earth, now brighter grown,
Can fix his gaze, will meet the eyes
Of ONE whose Spirit long was known,
And loved unseen ; and recognise
Their fall expression as His own.

“ See all shine forth as He appears,
Changed to His image, every one,
As dew-drops sparkle into stars
Beneath the rising of the Sun.

“ And, hark ! in singing forth they break,
With choral voices, hushed so long,
As birds, when they at sunrise wake,
Salute the splendour with a song.

“ ‘ O Sun ! ’ they say, ‘ so glorious now ! ’
How dim was that old sun gone by,
To Thee ! and how intense are Thou !
The Light of both the soul and eye.

“ ‘ O earth ! released from curse and thorn,
And basking in celestial light,
How fair and fresh thou art this morn .
Who seemed so weary overnight,

“ ‘ With sharing griefs of every child ;
We blamed thee then for looking thus,
But knew not how thou wouldst have smiled,
Except for sympathy with us.

“ ‘ O skies ! which like a veil did hide
So long the New Jerusalem,
But now thrown back, disclose that Bride,
Decked for her Lord in gold and gem,

“ ‘ We thought sometimes, at sunset hours,
We saw her brightness shimmering through ;
But need this body’s perfect powers,
To bear the full resplendent view.

“ ‘ O forms beloved ! which did obscure
The souls ye held, ye are the same,
But glorified, since now more pure,
Ye show, as through clear glass, that flame.

“ ‘ O music ! whose sweet half-known speech,
Seemed dark, yet pregnant, we avow
With baffled ear we strove to reach
Thy meanings then, so lucid now !

“ ‘ Now issue clear from golden strings ;
Absorb our voices in thy course ;
And, like a stream from many springs,
Roll on with their united force ;

“ ‘ Swell to a sea ; and with the sound
Of many waters, on the shore
Eternal, which thou risest round,
Break songfully for evermore !

“ ‘ From yonder blissful shades we come,
Where rest was sweet,—yet with delight
That there we found not our last home,
But only lodging for the night.’ ”

X.

My guest is gone ! and did not tell
Where standeth that last residence,
Where all the perfected shall dwell
For evermore,—and soul and sense,

With ripened powers and ended strife,
Find each free range and full employ,
And, blending in one vivid life,
God's twofold universe enjoy.

Yet let not souls, which death sets free,
As up the viewless path they win,
Say "Earth! we now have done with thee;
Adieu to all which thou hast been;"

But "Earth! we go yon heights to climb,
Another prospect to obtain;
And leave our cloaks here for the time,
In token we shall come again,

"Perchance our final leave to take;
But let us now such thought adjourn.
Meanwhile, these garments for our sake
Guard safely. We shall soon return!"

THE NARCISSUS.

"All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth; the flower fadeth."—ISA. xl. 6, 7

"That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. . . . But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body."—1 COR. xv. 36, 38.

PART I.

THE bells rang forth with pealing chimes,
Like peals of silvery laughter,
And told their changes many times,
And echoes chimed thereafter,—
When from the church, and through the throng,
Who round its doors had waited long,
The bridegroom, Ambrose, led with pride,
Sweet Florence, now his married bride.

Her delicate and lovely face,
Upon her slender form fresh grace
And light appeared to shed :
She moved as were she made of air ;
And gleamingly her golden hair
Enwreathed her beauteous head.

Like two clear sparkling founts, her eyes
Seemed from the hidden well to rise
Of her deep soul, and brightly show
How pure and full it worked below.
She wore a glistening robe of white ;
And 'neath her bride veil, clear and light,
Her radiant beauty softened shone,
As through a morning mist the sun.
A fresh bouquet of flowers she bare,
Snow-coloured, save that here and there
Among them a narcissus cup,
Like her own tresses, brightened up
With touch of gold, the general white ;
And village maidens with delight
Pressed near, beneath her feet to fling
Bouquets of all the flowers of spring ;
As if their wish to testify,
That hence o'er such her path might lie.

And Ambrose, comely, young, and brave,
Clasped close the precious hand she gave ;
As through the sunshine, that spring day,
Their white-horsed chariot drove away.

The guests were numerous and gay,

The feast magnificent and long ;
And when 'twas o'er, with speech and
 song,

The party issued from the room,
 Into the garden, where the air,
And April sunshine, buds and bloom,
 To all of them inviting were—
 But chiefly to the youthful pair.

The outward spring seemed but a part
Of their own spring in life and heart ;
The pairing birds made wood and grove
Resound with marriage lays of love ;
The flowers, and butterflies no less,
 Arrived at nuptial prime,
Blazed forth in splendid bridal dress ;
 And for their festal time,
The earth was decked with fitting grace,
And Heaven smiled down with sunny face.

Now Ambrose brought the party to
A rustic gate, and led them through,
His own contiguous grounds to view.
The bride hung back, but to the word
 Of Ambrose, pleading gaily how
 He could control her actions now,

F

And hold her to the new-made vow,
(Whereof he would no breach allow,)
To honour and *obey*, deferred.
Though half unwilling to be seen
So soon, in that domain as queen.

The woodland green was thin and bright ;
The orchard bloom was blush and white ;
And where, between the labyrinths
Of shrubbery, the lawn spread wide,
Were rainbow beds of hyacinths,
Streaked tulips' variegated pride,
Which, interspersed with flowers as fair,
Made patchwork of the gay parterre.
And still more flowery looked the ground,
With bright-robed ladies grouped around.
"Each beauty standing here might trace,"
Said Ambrose, "her reflected grace,
"And find some flower to match her
face :"

Then smiling, gave each blushing maid
Some blossom, to his eye arrayed,
In charms which she herself displayed.

"But which of all these flowers" said he,
"My Florence ! most resembles thee ?

Ah ! this narcissus seems to strike
My fancy as to thee most like.
I see it in her stately height,
Her graceful mien, her robe of white,
That golden circlet, like the wreath
Of hair, so coloured round thy head,
And not the last, the fragrant breath
Of sweetness round her presence shed.”
The young bride smiled ; such words could need
For recompense, no greater meed.

But now, behold the hour is come,
When she must leave her father's home ;
And through the golden vernal weather,
They went forth in the world together.

Three weeks had passed, when lo ! they come
To dwell within their own bright home ,
And soon about its garden roam.
A change had passed upon the scene ;
Now smiled amid its deepening green
The lilacs' white and purple shows,
The snowballs of the Guelder rose,
Laburnums dropping golden rain,
And crimson thorn,—so far all gain.

Bright things ! from tender leaping time
They straightway rush to flower ;
As human souls, in their May prime,
Put forth at once their power
In love's luxuriant gorgeous bloom,
A thing all colour and perfume ;
And that once fallen, must remain
The whole long summer green and plain.

Already, 'mid the vernal grace
Of this bright scene, decay found place.
Some beds were all in disarray ;
The daffodils had blazed away,
And like a torch reversed, each turned
Earthward its head, gone out and burned ;
The fair narcissus' bloom was past,
The hyacinths had smiled their last,
The tulips' hues were dimming fast ;
And, caught upon a lowly stem,
Faded the star of Bethlehem.
O holy Star ! by having left
Thy place in heaven, and growing from
That earthly root, art Thou bereft
Of immortality, and come
To share all earth-born beings' doom ?

This scene, on Florence passing by,
Struck mournfully, and in her eye
Compassion with regret was blent,
As o'er the fading flowers she leant.
"What! dying now?" she said; "just while
Summer and Spring at meeting smile?
Just *now*,—while Life is paramount,—
While fresh streams from its brimming fount
Through Nature's veins run quickening,
In forms of beauty issuing,
And fill the days, so bright and long,
With colour, fragrance, light, and song?
'Twere otherwise in autumn: I
Could fancy ye might bear to die,
When rainy winds bring down the leaves,
And all that is not dying, grieves.
But now!—to turn and close your eyes
From all this blue of summer skies,
And all this green of verdant boughs,
And all this light which Heaven allows,—
And lay so helplessly your heads,
Ne'er to be lifted, on your beds!—
O flowers! so early withering,
Is it not sore to die in spring?"

But looking up again, she met
Her husband's glance, who, coming by,
And seeing tear-drops in her eye,
Won her to tell him her regret ;
Then chased it forth, with lightsome laughter,
Which left a gladder mood thereafter.

PART II.

A few bright months of bliss had passed,
Each seeming shorter than the last,
When Florence on a sick-bed lay.
Her cheek with fatal bloom was red,
Like that which beauteously o'erspread
The leaves, now smitten with decay,
Or the bright flush of dying day ;
But Ambrose fondly hoped that care
Might save her yet,—or surely prayer !
Alas ! it seemed as if his God
Were sleeping, talking, or abroad ;
For in few weeks, with deep despair,
He saw that death was on the way ;
And soon each day appeared the last.
As once, a wasted form, she lay,

In her sad husband's arms held fast,
As if that desperate clasp could keep
His prize from sinking in the deep,—
She said, " Ah, dearest, thou and I
Have thought it must be hard to die,
When we had but begun to prove
The first rich sweets of youth and love.
The traveller, on foot ere noon,

When laughs the landscape in the sun,
Desireth not to reach too soon

The inn which shows his journey done.
'Tis when eve's shades have darkened earth,
And chill winds visit face and breast,
Its lights so winningly shine forth,

With hope of shelter, warmth, and rest.
Easy, we thought, to cease to live,
When all was o'er that life could give;
But not to rise up from the feast,

When in its glittering pride just seen,
By our great Host too soon released,

With appetite but roused and keen.
Yet He who made this world so fair,
Hath surely spent not all His care

Upon so circumscribed a scene ;
And He who loves us will not bring

Our hopes to perish in regret ;
So, though I wither in my spring,
Some glorious summer waits me yet !
O Saviour Christ ! my soul receive ;
Since Thou, who knowest what I leave,
Hast called me, Thou hast surely more
And greater things than these in store."

And scarcely had she ceased to speak,
When rapidly from brow and cheek,
Went out life's tint and light ;
As from a range of Alpine snows,
Dies in few moments sunset's rose,
And leaves them deathly white.

Ere long, a funeral in state
Passed slowly from the mansion gate,
And through November's miry lanes,
To that still place, with the remains,
Where, softly as a mother may
An infant from her arms down-lay,
When sleep hath made its eyelids close,
In its own cradle to repose,—
The Church deposits, in their deep
Still bed, her children fallen asleep,

And o'er them murmurs many a word
Of lullaby, by them unheard,
Describing how a rest so sweet

The paleness from their cheeks will take,
And make their bloom more bright, to greet
Their Father, when they wake.

But Ambrose, bowing down his head,
Heard less distinctly what she said,
Than the sharp fall of "dust to dust."
Meanwhile o'erhead a sudden gust
The sere leaves from the branches drave ;
A few hung shuddering o'er the grave,—
Then dropp'd upon the coffin lid,
More softly than the gravel did.
Right in the mourners' faces swept,
With driving rain, the windy storm ;
And on the cheeks of those who wept,
The cold drops mingled with the warm.

For Nature, burying her dead,
Had sighs to heave, and tears to shed.
She, all the spring and summer hours,
Had in succession nursed her flowers ;
And, during autumn's feeble shine,

Had sadly watched the last decline,
Received with love their dying sighs,
Then laid them out, and closed their eyes.
She drew her fogs down when they died,
Like blinds, the garish light to hide ;
Her pranking colours laid aside ;
And now, like Niobe, bereft
Of all her children—not one left—
With aspect sunk and wan, she gave
Their bodies to the mouldy grave.
But though with dimness and with chill
Her life was smitten sore,—though still
Weeping from her lost loves to part,
In mist and cloud she seemed to grope,—
Enshrined within her inmost heart,
She hid a sure and certain hope ;
And to the Church's solemn tongue,
Which told, in mingled moan and song,
Of faded grass, and flowers cut down,
And seeds that die, in weakness sown,
Ere long in power to rise again,—
Her winds, responsive, sighed Amen.

When all the mournful rite was done,
The widower homeward went alone,

Leaving behind the buried one.
And now full solitude he found ;
That eve it seemed to press him round,—
And with him rose the following day,—
Henceforth on all his life to weigh.
Unable in the house to stay,
Round his chill grounds he took his way ;
Not that he found the garden path
Less desert than his desert hearth,
But ceaseless motion suited best
Grief's restlessness, and endless quest
Of something neither here nor there,
Nor any more found anywhere.

No flower relieved the pale damp scene,
Nor any green but evergreen ;
But, gleaming from the fresh-turned mould,
 Rose upright marks, like gravestones white,
Each with a name inscribed, which told
 A flower lay buried there from sight.
The gardener still was labouring,
Committing to the ground, for spring,
The dormant roots of such, which now
No beauty and no grace could show,
Given as for prey to earth and worm,

Yet hiding each the undying germ
Of that which should be. And he thought,
While deep he laid the roots he brought,
In earth, and earth upon them cast,—
More of the next bloom than the last.

Seeing his master passing by,
He touched his hat, half awkwardly,
Abashed before the sanctity
Of grief he could not understand.
The man just then had in his hand
The bulb of that narcissus flower,
Compared by Ambrose one bright hour
To Florence, but not recognised
Or noticed now ; for half surprised,
His thought was, if he thought at all,
Why take such pains for things so small ?
Oh common daily sights and sounds !
Have ye still heart to go your rounds ?
Why not break up, fall in, and cover
With darkness hearts whose light is over ?

Over. And though the day and night
Lost not their reckoning, but aright
Still kept their times with shade and light,—
Though moons held on to wax and wane,—

He took no note of time ; all aim
In life was gone, all things were vain ;
Why should they his attention claim ?
That was all sacred to his woe,
And nought beside he cared to know.
Christmas beguiled him not that year,
To share with friends its genial cheer ;
And its glad tidings scarcely moved
His soul to bless the Love they proved,
Or mark how rose that Morning Star,
Which shows the Sunrise not afar.

The busy world went on its way,
Buying and selling day by day,
Dying, and marrying, being born ;—
Prizes were in its lottery drawn,
Battles were fought, and races run,
And all were lost, yet all were won ;—
Great deeds were dreamed, and dared, and
done ;—

And round the earnest gleamed the fun.—
But he, once gayest of the gay,
Most life-full of the living, lay,
As weighed on by a funeral pall,
Indifferent, blind, and deaf to all.
The world had seemed a lighted hall,

Replete with song, and mirth, and rout,
And figures passing in and out ;—
But one had suddenly withdrawn,
The partner, who with him had gone
Through one brief dance ;—and now to him
The scene, itself unchanged, looked dim.
The music and the dance went on ;—
He in a window sat alone,
Heeding no more the noise and light,
But gazing forth into the night,
Through which that fair one passed from sight.

Sometimes he wildly called her name,
And listened,—but no answer came,
Nor any tidings.—Ah ! 'tis strange,
That they who scarce above a day
Have e'er before remained away,
Without some word sent home to say
That all is well,—so long should stay,
And send no news ! Can this be change ?
Are they at once indifferent grown
To the old nest, like birds new-flown ?
Or is it only that they find
No post, nor any willing mind
To be their messenger ? 'Tis so

On our side, but *we* do not know
E'en where the travellers be. O dead !
Say, does this silence seem as dread
To you ? Are you, too, yearning thus
To get some word, some sign from us,
And thinking, ' Never did we roam
So long, without some news from home ?'
You think us thoughtless, think us cold ?

You miss the knowledge that our love
Did ne'er your image so enfold,
Was ne'er so passionately told ?

Or do ye hear it all above,
And lack but voice to answer ? This
Were surely sadder. What distress
Could so torment a mother's heart,
Detained within some room apart
By some strong fate,—as thence to hear
A child she burns to seek and cheer,
Weeping and calling after her,—
And have no power to speak or stir ?
If ye are dumb and lame, 'tis gain
If deafness shield you from that pain.

A weary pilgrimage is grief,
To which no halt affords relief.

All day—all day—and day by day,
The pilgrim walks, though with such pain,
He longs to sink down on the way,
And never move again.
However tired, he may not stop,
Nor lie down wilfully ;
He must keep onward till he drop ;
And in his misery
He thinks despairingly each morn,
How shall he reach the setting sun ?
Still more, how force his footsteps on,
Till all the pilgrimage be done ?

So long to Ambrose now it grew,
Although the weeks yet past were few,
Since he had looked on Florence last,
He wondered, when he dared forecast,
How should he bear the long—long years—
His young life promised, slow with tears ?
Or would they learn to go more fast ?

Alas ! the future seems to give
In this a dread alternative,—
Live on in never-eased regret ;
Or learn the lost one to forget.

Time offers a narcotic balm :—

Ah ! how can time such anguish calm,
Except by numbing that quick love,
Which did erewhile its presence prove
By nameless bliss, as now by grief ?

“ Better sharp pain than such relief ! ”

Cried Ambrose, and embraced his woe

As if it were a link, which bound
His spirit still to hers, and so

Preserved him true to love discrowned.

“ She is not wholly lost,” he thought,

“ So long as all my soul is fraught

With her sweet looks, and voice, and touch.

O Time ! when Death has stolen so much,

Come not, professing loss to heal,

As but a second thief, to steal

This last hoard, leaving yet more poor

The heart, which only cries ‘ Restore ! ’

Ah, bring it not to utter wrack !

But if love’s object it must lack,

Still let dear love itself remain,

Although the source of cureless pain.

Better to linger in the shade,

By that eclipséd glory cast,

Than wander on where both must fade,

G

And sink into the viewless past :
But better still to close mine eyes,
And lie down darkly where she lies.
O Death ! whose wound I feel so sore,
Come back ! thou only hast its cure ;
For thou to every heart distressed
Art lovely for thine easeful rest ;
But chiefly to the heart bereaved,
(If the sweet tale may be believed,)
For the reunion thou canst grant.
For that, and that alone I pant ;
No other comfort meets my want."

To this replied Death's counterfeit,
Called Sleep, " Then *I* thy want can meet ;
For I to every heart distressed
Am lovely for mine easeful rest ;
But chiefly to the heart bereaved,
For the reunion I can grant,
Whereby its loss may be retrieved."

Then did sweet dreams his soul enchant,
Wherein its craving was appeased
With the dear presence for a while,—
The straining of the senses eased
With the lost tones, and look, and smile.

Ah ! but he paid a heavy price
For entering that lost paradise ;—
To wake in darkness with a start,
 And feel, more keenly than before,
The gnawing of a hungry heart,
 Which should be satisfied no more ;—
Recalled from sunlit garden bowers,
Where she appeared among her flowers,
As in last summer's golden hours,—
To hear the wintry hailstones dash
Against the pane, or rain-drops plash,
And know them pattering her grave ;
While in the winds there seemed to rave
 A voice that loosed a secret pain,
 Which now at midnight might complain.
With clamorous shrieks it seemed to crave
 For something lost, invoked in vain :
Then heart-exhausting sighs were heaved,
And choking sobs, at times relieved
 By floods of weeping rain.

From such a night's abandonment,
 With a complexion ashen gray,
 And red blurred streaks, at break of day,
Rose Nature calm, with weeping spent.

"Twas for her dead she sorrowed so :
She built them sepulchres of snow ;
And shewed her inward heaviness,
By mournful looks, and mourning dress.
Her days were dim : she could not smile ;
And oft, when men in downy bed
Were laid, or danced and banqueted
In lighted mansions, she the while
Sat outside wailing, unconsolated
By earth or heaven, both dark and cold.

O Nature ! why shouldst *thou* lament ?
Has not each spring-time all these ages
Shewn thee the sap's quick re-ascent,—
Renewed by sure and rapid stages,
The beauteous life in wood and bower,—
Brought back the birds which took their flight,—
Re-filled thy skies with song and light,—
And raised up every buried flower ?
Thy darlings are not dead, they sleep ;
And being laid in earth so deep,
They are but kept more safe and warm,
From deadly frosts and wintry storm,
From winds that blast, and rains that steep.

The earth will prove a shelter strong ;
But cannot hide such treasures long.

PART III.

The time of Lent had come and passed ;
And he whose life seemed all a fast,
Since God had taken that away,
Which kept his soul at feast all day,
Had, in the solemn Passion tide,
Kept closely at the Victim's side,
And watched his patience till he died.
He marked, in dark Gethsemane,
The conflict and the victory
Of Him who prayed, and prayed again,
And yet again,—'twould seem in vain,
Since what he craved he did not gain ;
Although 'twas afterwards averred,
That yet those tearful cries were heard,—
Till e'en himself, who on that day
When his beloved one dying lay,

Could only in his anguish pray
That the dread cup might pass away,—
Was able, like that Holy One,
Who learned obedience, though a Son,
By suffering, at last to say,
“Father, Thy will, not mine, be done!”

Then onward still, from loss to loss,
He followed, feeling his own cross
Grow lighter, while he kept the track
Of Him who on his bleeding back
The sorrows of the whole world bore.
It seemed relief when all was o’er;
And He who was so fain to save
All but Himself, attained his grave.
And here the mourner’s heart would pray,
“Ah, Lord! let me, too, enter thither,
My weary frame by Thine to lay,
And feel sweet rest my pain repay.”

His spirit heard the answer, “Whither
I go thou canst not come to-day,
But shalt hereafter. Thou must lay
The cross down then, outside to stay;
It cannot pass the door in hither:
And thou, from that sore burden freed,

Shalt follow me at better speed,
Wherever yet my path may lead."

Dear Lord, Thy people still precede !
And though Thy little flock bereaved,
 In darkness mourned and wept,
We, who from them have light received,
 Rejoice our Leader slept

Then, holy Sabbath ! let thy rest,
 Thy hushed and sacred hours, infold
 The body where the stone is rolled,
The Soul that on the Father's breast,
No more forsaken, lies all blest.
And blest henceforth are all the dead
 Who die in Him ; from work they cease ;
And, entering on the rest He made,
 Keep Sabbath with their Lord in peace.

Now joyfully, with light new-born,
Rang out the bells on Easter morn.
They smote on Ambrose' dreaming ear,
Who seemed a marriage chime to hear,
But broken, faint, and far away,—
Then suddenly distinct and near,

Their peal proclaimed the holy day,
When he was wakened by a beam
Of sunshine, which began to stream
With vernal strength into his room.
But marvel not he woke with gloom,
Forgetting in the mourner's woe,
The Christian's joy and hope ; for lo !
This morn, which should all joy convey,
Had fallen upon his wedding day !

He rose, and ere the time of prayer,
Went forth to taste the balmy air,
In his broad grounds, to-day as fair
As on that day last year they were.
The April sun had struck with power
The earth, and raised up many a flower,
Whose tints of life beneath his rays
Appeared re-kindling. What a blaze
Of colour broke from gloomy mould
Anemones, red, purple, white,—
Streaked tulips,—hyacinths rainbow bright,
And daffodils of gold :
And risen again, most fair of them,
The morning star of Bethlehem !
The darkness of their burial-place

Had dulled no wonted hue ;
Death on their forms had left no trace ;
But every charm and every grace
Shone forth in splendour new.
And lo ! there stood with stately height,
And graceful mien, and robe of white,
And golden circlet,—that sweet flower,
Which once to Ambrose seemed to bear
The image of a form more fair,
Now rising not for sun or shower.
The sight provoked that memory,
And Ambrose wept. “O Spring !” said he,
“Who dost the face of earth renew,
There is a thing thou canst not do.
These flowers that round my loved one grew,
Though frailer, and of days more few,
Than even she, may spring again
Beneath thy simple sun and rain ;
But thou canst boast no agency
Her beauty to revivify.
A vain parade is this Death makes
Of rendering back the spoils he takes !
He yields the trivial and the cheap,
But keeps the precious hid so deep
That all the laws of nature lack

The force to reach and bring them back."

While thus he pondered, suddenly
 Again struck up the glad sweet bells,
 With the triumphant tone that tells
Of victory, yet meant to be
A summons to the house of prayer.
Thither did Ambrose now repair,
And with the parish gathered there,
He heard of Him, who lay indeed
 In a deep human tomb,
But quicker than the quickest seed
 Threw off its chilling gloom,—
The First-fruit of that rich-sown field
Which shall a glorious harvest yield,—
And, forcing e'en through rock a way,
Was risen before the orb of day.
As well might night keep back the sun,
As Death that earlier rising One !
Death strove in vain to hold Him longer,
For He was Love, and Love is stronger.
 With Death in deadly strife,
 He won, Himself the Life !
 From deepest shades of night
 He broke, Eternal Light !

Hell could no dungeon be,
For lo, He held the key !
Corruption had no worm
For His untainted form ;
The grave no victory,—
The Resurrection He !

'Twas just at this sweet time
Of Spring, at morning's prime ;
And in a garden's bound,
With spring-flowers bursting round ;
So his first glance and smile were met
On issuing from that prison,
By hyacinth, and violet,
Narcissus, tulip,—dewy wet,—
All from *their* graves new risen !

And such, disposed in bright array,
Within the village church to-day,
Bore witness Christ was risen indeed,
And must be still alive ,
For whence beside could bulb or seed
Its quickened life derive ?
All hail the tiniest springing rill,
Which shews life's Fountain flowing still !

The choicest with mute smile made bright
The sacred table,—in the east,
Whence shone this morning's Light of Light,—
And decked the symbol marriage feast :
As saying, " Yet more fair and fresh
Shall be *their* resurrection state,
Who, sharing now Christ's blood and flesh,
Become with Him incorporate,—
His cherished Body, which must rest
In hope, then rise in glory drest."

Ah ! thus,—that deep sleep being past,
Whereinto He for her was cast,
The second Adam clasps His Bride,
Formed from Him, to His wounded side,
Which gave her life,—and saith, " My own,
Flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone !
My nature thou partakest now ;
If I am deathless, so art thou."

And Ambrose, kneeling at that shrine,
Where, under blessing words divine,
He with his new-made bride had knelt
Upon their marriage morning,—felt
The future with the past unite

In one horizon ring, all bright,
Encircling present dark with light.

Then homeward walking, he could trace
How,—while God's house itself won grace,
From Nature's humble sympathy
With her great Monarch's victory,
Presenting, where they should appear,
The first-fruits of her flowery year,—
Herself outside, with radiant face,
Was joining in the festival,
And joyfully receiving all
Her buried dead alive. Each bank
With fern and primroses was rank ;
The grass beneath the greening trees
Was starred with wood anemones ;
And things which had last season crept
Along the earth, and ate and slept,
And having wrought their works, had lain
All winter still, through frost and rain,
As if they could not stir again,—
Had now found wings, and learned to rise
Aloft, as brilliant butterflies,
In snowy resurrection dress,
Which spoke of bridal, none the less :

And bridal songs in wood and grove
Rang forth as resurrection lays,
From singers singing all of Love,—
Yet finding that high theme include
A song for heaven and earth, renewed
With lustrous sun and budding sprays,—
And unawares responsive to
Another choir beyond the blue ;
Where angels hymned the great event
Of Palestine. These earthward bent
Their eyes that day, and smiled to see
The wealth of blossom breaking free
In garden, meadow, copse, and lea ;
Yet sighed, as not with this content :—
“ God’s acre still seems winter-bound ;
The names upon the seed-marks show
That much good seed lies sown below,
But only One has broken ground.
Too wintry still is earth ; still blow
The biting blasts of bitter pains ;
Still tears descend in drenching rains :
’Tis best those flowers should keep below
The ground as yet, and never know
How cheerless all above remains,
How dark the clouds, how chill the snow.”

That night was one of their bright race
Sent earthward through the starry space,
A watch by Ambrose' bed to keep,
And rule his dreams. He fell asleep,
With thoughts of Easter hymns and flowers,
Engaging his relaxing powers ;
And knew not 'twas the Angel's hand
Which pushed his soul off from the strand
Of waking thought, then took command,
And steered her over sleep's dark sea,
 To the Protean isle of dreams,
Whose ever-changing scenery
 Diverse to every comer seems.

There Ambrose now discerned a dark
And wintry landscape, chill and stark,
 Which early dawn began to show ;
Above what seemed a sea of graves,
Whose hillocks heaved like gloomy waves,
 A nearly waned moon hung low,
With dull-hued crimson round her spread,
As if much blood beneath her shed,
Were there exhaled in vaporous red.
And, watching silently afar,
Heaven held a bright and morning Star.

The world seemed sleeping ; yet there walked
Some human beings near, and talked
Of earthquake, battle, plague, and dearth.

With hearts that seemed to fail for fear,
They said, "The end is surely near :
A final winter wastes the earth ;
Which, like dead leaves, will lay us in
Where lie below our silent kin."

But some replied, with calmness grand,
"Nay, Spring will shortly change this scene ;
The fig begins to put forth green,
Which shows the Summer nigh at hand :
And yonder is the blood-red dawn,
Which heralds the eternal morn."

The East, meanwhile, was waxing bright ;
And presently a wondrous light,
Intense, insufferably bright,
Streamed all across and caught the West,
And the whole heavens at once possessed.
The hues of sunrise filled the sky :
And lo ! beheld by every eye,—

Amidst the crimson and the amber,
And purple, of the clouds on high,
Came, like a Bridegroom from his chamber,—

ONE like unto the Son of man,
Whose countenance was as the sun,
Shining in strength ; of mortals none
Undazzled could His features scan,
Which beamed o'er all that territory,
And filled both heaven and earth with glory.

Before Him all the fields rejoiced,
And all the woods, with songs sweet-voiced :
And, both in field and wood, the trees
Clapped young leaves, handlike, in the breeze ;
For this great Sun, arisen so warm,
With healing in His wings,
Did suddenly the scene transform
To beauty more than spring's.
The mountains and the hills
Flowed down with thawing rills ;
The heavens rejoiced, the earth was glad,
With new created verdure clad.

And now beneath that ardent ray
The ground began strange clefts to show,
As if some mighty force below
Were to the surface breaking way.
Still higher heaved the heaving sods,—

H

Then open split and fell asunder,
As lift and part the earthy clods,
When spring's young growth is pushing under ;
And beauteous forms began to rise ;
They threw aside the earth that hid
Their forms, as 'twere a coverlid,
And opening wondering eyes,—
Exclaimed as in surprise,
“What ! is the long night past ?
Is morning come at last ?”

And He who, sunlike, on their bed,
Had looked in through their lattice, said,
“Yea, morn and spring ! the light hath shone ;
Awake ! put beautiful garments on ;
Arise and shine, 'tis day !
A glory hath risen ; the shadows flee ;
O fair belovèd, awake and see !
Arise, and come away ;
For lo, 'tis spring ! the winter is past ;
The rain is over and gone ;
The vine with a goodly smell buds fast ;
The singing of birds comes on ;
The voice of the turtle is heard in the land ;
And, showing that summer is near,

The tender leaves of the fig expand ;—
 So my flowers must reappear,
And show their beauty in upper day.
Rise, loved and fair, then, and come away !”

Then all that desert of repose
With bright life blossomed as the rose ;
Not only in the garden grounds
Walled round with cemetery bounds,
Where careful hands the seed had sown,
 And marks inscribed above it set,
Whereon its name and sort were shown,
 That none its sowing might forget,—
 But mountain side, and vale,
 And hill, and plain, and dale,
 And open field, and wood,
 And moory solitude,
Broke forth with brilliant clusters, grown
From seed of God, that slept unknown,
Interred by Nature’s hand alone,—
And showed how far and wide ’twas strown.

The tree of life, in budding bowers,
 Spread green amid the teeming swarm
Which covered now the earth like flowers,

In type of beauty multiform,
As such might be, but fair and bright,
And pure and perfect, every one,
And doubly glorious in the Sun.
Which had revived them by his light :
And from their bloom the same warm ray
Wiped all the dewy tears away.

Now Ambrose scanned them, far and nigh ;
And lo ! among them struck his eye,
His own beloved one ! whom no change
Of face or form had rendered strange.
Her beauty seemed the same, yet more ;
Her features moulded as before,
Her form as delicate ; yet both
Appeared of new and heavenly growth.
Her dress but seemed more dazzling white,
Her golden hair more aureole bright,
Than when they filled his home with light ;
Her eyes, albeit more heavenly blue,
Yet resting on him, thrilled him through
With the soft liquid light he knew.

And rushing forward at that look,
Her hand within his own he took,

And said, "O Florence! dost thou own me?
Hast not forgotten or outgrown me?
Can we again dwell side by side?"
But ere she, (save by smiles,) replied,
There rose a loud triumphant shout,
A mighty trumpet sounded out,—
And suddenly the whole bright crowd
Were caught up to the shining cloud,
To meet their Lord in airy flight;
And Ambrose with them, clasping tight
The hand of Florence. Joining then
The winged descending angel train,
They followed Him to earth again.

Then summoned He the glorious band,
In white all clothed, to His right hand;
And set a crown on every head,
Of golden amaranth; then said,
"O thou my Church, unstained and bright,
Shalt walk with Me in bridal white,
Once sharer in My strife;
And being faithful unto death,
Upon thy head, for bridal wreath,
Shalt wear the crown of life.

I have been risen long ; and know
That on this side the tomb
Is no more death, and no more woe,
And no more night and gloom,
For either them who slept and woke,
Or them who watched till morning broke.

“ And, O ye newly risen ! ye mind
The flowers, which yearly died, and rose,
All glowing from their brief repose,
In their dark chambers under earth ?
I bade them do it, to set forth
The resurrection ye should find ;
That ye might gladlier sleep in trust,
Since they rose faithful to their kind,
And glorious, from the dust.
Ye mind the butterflies, which burst
Their coffin chrysalis,
And, far more beauteous than at first,
Took wing ? They did all this
To show how ye with forms should rise
Transcending those ye wore before,
And find new powers, confined no more
To earth, but fitted for the skies.
I bade the sun awake all these,

To show how I would waken you ;
I sent each spring with promises
That I would yet make all things new.—
But did then these against you boast,
That spring raised them, not you, from death ?
An idle vaunt ! for winter's breath
After few weeks, or months at most,
Again o'ertook and bade them die.
The sun which quickened flower and fly,
To keep them living had no power,
But hastened on to bring the hour
Of the glad grave's fresh victory ;
That so, by rising yearly, they
Their message to all hearts might say,
Through all the ages, o'er and o'er :
But now their mission is complete ;
And ye once risen, shall die no more.
No sun shall light, nor any heat,
On you, to exhaust your bloom ; but ye
Shall dwell for ever on the brink
Of life's eternal Fount, and drink
The freshening Water endlessly,
Adown whose River, Spring makes seen
The tree of life, in vivid green.
And I will be your Sun ;

To stimulate your life with light,
Keep all your graces growing bright,
And unto all eternity
Maintain o'er death that victory
Which ye through Me have won.
I tasted once your death, and ye
Shall share My immortality !"

Then swelled a grand triumphant song,
Re-echoed by the angel throng,
Who hovered near, and sounding long.
But now the groups which starred the ground,
All whitely clothed and golden crowned,
Grew indistinct, because too bright,
And seemed to Ambrose' dazzled sight,
Like large narcissus clusters round ;—
Then all the scene dissolved in light.

And next he felt a restless tossing ;
For by the angel's hand still steered,
The sea of sleep he was re-crossing.
As now the waking shore he neared,
The last toss threw him on his bed ;
Where stranded, motionless he lay,
And mused till dawnlight glimmered gray ;
While back to heaven the angel sped.

“ O Florence ! O my love ! ” thought he,

“ How well contented shall I be,

When the last hour of life is fled,

Extinguished its dim candle light,

And I may seek a stiller bed !

My soul will be with thine all night ;

And from its visions of delight,

I shall not in the darkness wake,

To feel the vigilant, quick pain,

Seize all my consciousness again ;

But sleep till morn without a break ;

Then rouse at sunrise, nothing loth,

To find with rapture, O my bride !

That thou wert sleeping by my side,

And the same Light has waked us both !

“ But whether thus I sleep and wake,

Or burn my lamp till morning break,

I know I then shall with thee shine,

Arrayed in glorious dress like thine.

“ So till such slumber close mine eyes,

Each weekly morning of the Sun

Shall mind me of that sun-like One,

Whose rising shall make men to rise,
And to dead cheeks the life-flush bring,
Like dawn-rose to dim eastern skies,
Or to pale flower-buds, hues of spring.
And every Easter sun shall wake,
In resurrection from thy dust,
That flower which to my fancy spake
Of thy sweet looks, and for thy sake
Of Eden's garden,—(yea, and must !
Though from those bowers of bliss I'm thrust,)
But now will lead my soul enchained
To that fair Paradise regained,
Where, kept no more by Michael's sword,
The tree of life shall be restored,—
Where they whom now the earth must hold,
Shall rise and shine in white and gold,—
And, gladder than the cuckoo's note,
Archangels' songs around them float.
Ay, thus upbreking from thy mould,
'Twill show the world in what fair guise
Will come up that which lower lies,
And is not ready yet to rise,—
That precious seed, but sown too deep
For common springs to break its sleep,—
Which only needs, yet must await

A stronger Sun to penetrate
Its bed, and make it germinate.

“ I fear no process of decay ;
For though thy form dissolve away,
As utterly as flowers of May
In winter, whose last season’s bloom
The deepest search could ne’er exhume,—
And though thy features and thy smile
Forego existence for a while,
As wholly as do their sweet hues,—
Yet God their image doth not lose ;
And when the season cometh round,
Shall all be in His memory found,
That each its own may reassume.

Each line and tint that death effaced,
Shall then be faultlessly retraced ;
And that which vanished in thy tomb,
Throw up afresh a perfect bloom.

“ Nor will I dread that lapse of years
Can kill my love. Avaunt such fears !
Though time should make it cease to weep,
Or even bring it restful sleep,

I know 'twill wake alive and strong.
For if, because the winter's long,
We cannot dwell through all its hours
On memories of the summer flowers,
Or even keep their image clear,—
 If deep in January, we lose
 A full impression of the rose,—
If, frost-bound, we forget how dear
The pink or lily was last year,—
Yet when next risen, they bloom anew,
We find their dearness risen too.
And when thy beauty reappears,
Though after fifty thousand years,
I know 'twill thrill me as of old ;
Nay more, for splendour never told
Will crown it then. May I behold
The heavenly bloom 'twill then unfold !”

Ah me ! what varied bloom Earth's fields
 In that celestial Spring will show,
When death's long frost breaks up, and yields
 The world of beauty hid below !

O Spring ! we sometimes dream thou 'rt near,
 When some divine reviving breath

Seems passing o'er this scene of death ;
And suddenly of hopeful cheer,

We look to see the leaves expand
On those slow fig-trees, signal clear
Of endless Summer nigh at hand.

Ah ! still the jealous buds enfold
The new creation from the cold ;
And chilling winds again prevail.

But yet we know a change impends ;
The very rain to haste it tends ;
The Spring may linger, will not fail.

From that deep dark when Christ was born,
In Earth's mid-winter, brightening morn
Hath daily taken from the night ;
At evening-time it grows more light ;
And though 'tis winter yet,—despite
The light's increase,—still, since each day
Its tide marks higher a little way,
On both the shores of night, we know
Whereunto this at last shall grow,—
That conquering Light shall overflow
All hours with summer noontide glow.
Nor day nor night shall time then mark
With alternating clear and dark ;

But one long day to God well known,
Shall reign with its resplendent crown,
The Sun which no more goeth down !

Rise quickly, Sun of Righteousness !
Bring in the marriage morn ; and bless
Creation waiting for her King.
And oh come quickly, blessed Spring !

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

SOLILOQUY OF QUEEN MARIE ANTOINETTE

ON THE MORNING OF HER EXECUTION.

O DAY! forbear to dawn awhile, and let me be alone ;
 Keep back thy chill hue from the walls, and damp grey
 paving-stone ;
 Stay hidden under whelming night, as life lies hid
 in death ;
 And let me through night's silence hear this briefly
 staying breath.

When thy—outside—full daylight, through these bars
 as twilight gleams,
 I'll turn awhile to sleep, and seek to lose myself in
 dreams,
 Before I go where thou and I must bid a long fare-
 well ;—
 But now await, and let me hear my heart its secrets
 tell.

So soon to be at large,—I feel no more these walls'
control ;

And if I shrink,—it is with doubt if God absolves my
soul.

The blood of emperors disdains to chill with lower
fear ;

My heart would ne'er confess it, though no ear should
overhear.

.

O heart, upon whose throbs an icy hand its cold will
lay !

O proud blood, that along these veins wilt weakly pour
away !

O soul, that martyrdom, (I yet may hope,) will speed on
high !

How is it with ye now, while this last darkness passes
by ?

Calm.—calm,—the tempest on my heart hath long
since done its worst ;

It matters little now what earthly storms may o'er it
burst :

It lieth as a shattered wreck upon a desert shore :

The billows may rush o'er it, but they cannot break it
more.

It lieth as a withered plant, which perished in a blast,
Now heeding not the faded leaves its rage hath o'er it
cast ;—

A cold tomb for emotions, which, when living, felt
such pain,
But died at last of agony, and will not feel again.

So harmless fell the shafts of rage, the people aimed
all day,

While listening to the vain defence that they have
made me say ;

And harmless was the mean attire they gave me for a
shame ;

I know to whom in after years will cling that touch of
blame.

O unborn nations ! while I stood among that scoffing
crowd,—

Their cruel curse, instead of crown, upon my head
unbowed,—

Like snow on colder ice, their scorn on my unmoved
despair,—

How did I feel your pitying heart and silent verdict
there !

Your calm clear eyes amid the gaze of hatred I could
see ;

How tenderly their friendly light shone through its
glare on me !

How pleading seemed your plaintive tones at each re-
viling word !

Amidst anathemas I smiled,—it was your voice I heard !

Then came the word of death ; they looked, but did
not see me quail :

Can the blasted tree fear lightning ? or the fallen tree
the gale ?

Do crumbled cinders fear the fire ? a beggar robbers
nigh ?

And I, who long have ceased to live, shall I now fear
to die ?

They had lowered me into sorrow, with my heart tied
for a stone ;

And I had felt the bottom unto which they let me
down :

And now their line lay slack,—I smiled ; for I was
victor then !

Alas ! I thought that scorn was dead, and yet it stirs
again.

Die scorn ! die pride ! die vengefulness ! die pain ! die
all but love !

For *thou* must tarry in my heart, to rise with it above :
Yet while thou livest here, pain lives ; earth never parts
ye two ;

O my children ! O my children ! now I sigh to think of
you !

O my children ! hapless children ! must I leave you in
this snow,

In shelter only of the clouds, whose showering ye shall
know ?

Will the tempest chill your tender forms, still warm
from mine embrace ?

And the hail succeed the kisses that I left upon your
face ?

O my children ! have your ears yet lost the sound of
my farewell ?

And are those tears of mine yet cool, that scorched you
as they fell ?

Or, vapoured by their own heat, did they passionately
rise,

With impotent appealing, to the all-recording skies ?

Alas ! the soul that warmed them will not touch you
thus again ;
Betwixt it and the living lips through which it blessed
you then,
The dark of Space, with all its worlds, will shortly
intervene,
And the voice, where lips and spirit met, dissolve like
mist between.

I leave you with the Father of the unloved fatherless :
May He protect your footsteps through the dreary wil-
derness !

My heart is full of prayer to Him to shield you from
your foes,
And them from further curse of blood that in forgive-
ness flows.

Yet,—in the flowerless desert shall ye care to wander
more,

With the grief behind you throwing its long shadow far
before ?

Will not earth's softest breeze blow chill upon your
hearts bereft ?

And her gentlest voice sound startling, in the silence
ours have left ?

Will you not blame me that I prayed, and left you in
your pain ;

And did not let you sink through death into our arms
again ?

Alas, I know not what to ask ! I must defer my prayer ;
I'll bear it with me into heaven, and frame it rightly
there.

But my children, blessed children ! O my little ones
above !

Who watch me with the calmness of your silent angel
love,

Whose eyes have grown familiar with the light that in
them lies,

And whose souls dwell more in heavenly thought than
earthly memories,—

Will you forgive the prayers I breathed in anguish for
your life,

When you on regal couches writhed in mortal fever
strife ?

Believe me that I did not know what storms were
coming o'er,

When I was mourning thus to see your frail barks
drawn ashore.

Will you forgive me for the tears I wasted on your
tomb ?

And pay them back in heavenly smiles where comes no
further doom ?

Believe me that a greater weight of thanks has since
been poured

Before the deeper loving and the further seeing Lord.

And thou, my earthly love ! whom now a second crown
adorns,

The gift of Him whose earthly one than thine had
sharper thorns,

Wilt thou be near the gate of heaven, that I may
quickly know

How bright a smile has now o'ergrown the lines of
earthly woe ?

The hate that compasses my death consoles my widow-
hood ;

The malice that would consummate my ruin, works my
good :

The stricken brute may thank the last hard blow that
ends its pain ;

How much more I ! to whom 'twill bring such vast and
varied gain.

They call my death a punishment ; where doth the
suffering lie ?

Is it the leaping of the soul to all its love on high ?

The mortal blow ? Before the nerves have told it to the
mind,

'Twill be in a far region, which their message cannot
find.

So shall I know no maze confused of earth and heaven
at strife,—

No sense of life o'erwhelmed by death, or death re-
opening life,—

No sinking of the life-thrill from the quivering nerves
away,—

No breaking of the glory through the common light of
day :—

But while the street and scaffold stand before me hard
and clear,

The roar of maddened hatred like a tempest in mine
ear,—

A sudden lightness from the flesh will make my spirit
start,

A sudden ease from pain will spread like summer
through my heart,

A sudden hush will tell me that the crowd's exultant
curse

Is severed from my hearing by the silent Universe !

And with the wonder looking up, my Saviour ! I shall
see,

Thy human, mercy-speaking eyes fixed tenderly on me ;
As still as they had watched me long,—Thy hand with
its nail mark

Uplifted still from guiding me to glory through the
dark.

Ah ! then let Thy eternal love my spirit softly greet,
As borne down with my weight of joy I sink before
Thy feet !

NON SINE LUMINE.

Motto inscribed on the north side of a sun-dial pedestal.

Non sine Lumine !
E'en on that side of thee
Where no sun cheerily
 Sendeth his glance,
Save in full summer-time,
Just at the eve and prime,
When a stray beam sometime
 Smileth askance.

There beat the hail and snow,
When winter whirlwinds blow,
Or Spring's pulse sinketh low
 In the dark night :
Yet, 'midst the driving gale,
Should the clouds rend and fail,
Looks forth the North star pale,
 Not without light !

Non sine Lumine !
So will the Christian be,
However northerly
 His face be set.
Just as the day declines,
Hope round the corner shines ;
Faith's polestar breaks the lines
 Of wild regret.

Saviour, I look to Thee !
Non sine Lumine
Will all my voyage be,
 If Thou art near.
In my most Arctic nights,
Let Thy Aurora lights
O'er the cold iceberg heights
 Northwards appear !

Steer me o'er life's dark sea ;
Round its rocks pilot me ;
Then from its treachery,
 Where reigneth night,
Non sine Lumine
Let my last passage be,
Into Eternity,
 Where all is light !

EARTH'S AWAKING.

EARTH, like a child in bed,
Lay still in wintry sleep, not long ago ;
But Spring came like a nurse, with noiseless tread,—
And drawing off the coverlet of snow,

Stooped down and kissed her brow
Softly, again—again,—till Earth awoke,
And opening violet eyes, looked up to know
Whose touch it was which thus her slumber broke.

And straightway knowing Spring,
Whose own warm smile of love was on her face,
In winsome smiles she broke forth answering,
And leaped up joyously to her embrace.

Spring washed her first with showers,
Then dressed her in a robe of tender green,
And lastly filled her lap with fresh bright flowers ;
And Earth forgot how sleepy she had been.

M A Y.

Now Spring hath reached her culminating hour ;

And what a tide of life and loveliness

Hath been updrawn by her attracting power !

The silver chequered blue looks down to bless

The thousand thousand tender shades of green,

Which blend their varying brightness over earth ;

The woods are closing all their arches in ;

And the laburnum flowers are dropping forth

Amid the boughs like beams, which shimmer through

Where'er the young leaves part to show the blue.

The pools, so rough and gray 'neath winter's gale,

Now slumber in the warmth,—while sunny gleams,

And interlacing boughs, and May-thorn pale,

Lie pictured on their tranquil sleep, like dreams.

It is as if the earth had just received

A gracious absolution from the curse ;

And for man's many-fallen tears no worse,
Had all her primal loveliness retrieved ;—
As if God, bending o'er her, had been moved,
And said, ' O Earth, my child, my still beloved !
My angels loved to tread thy Eden grass,
And underneath thy shadowy foliage pass,
Casting a light which was not sunshine there,—
And see their whiteness in thy pools, and bear
Thy flowers to heaven upon their shining hair.
It was not thou who didst my word gainsay ;
The laws I gave to thee were all obeyed,
When on thine innocence my curse I laid,
To show I held thee of less worth for aye,
Than him who stood there of my voice afraid.
Since then,—while he has lower sunk in sin,—
In thine allegiance is no treachery,
No lukewarmness has in thy worship been,
No schism in thy Church,—where winds with song,
And leaves and fountains with low melody,
And flowers with incense, all the summer long
In unmarred unity do worship me.

' Therefore, O Earth ! I fondly bless thee now,
Breathing my inmost spirit o'er thy face ;
And thou to man shalt be my messenger,

If haply thou within his heart canst stir
Some tenderness, to make his proud will bow.

Tell him I love him still ! that mine embrace
Will still be warm for him when he returns,—

That still my name is Love,—that I to thee
Have whispered of my secret thoughts apart,
And that thou knowest how my spirit yearns

For my lost son, till he comes back to me :
And show to him thy beauty, coloured o'er

With all my nature's inward symmetry,
And grace, and purity, for which his heart
Refused to be the canvas any more.

Tell him, I love him ! from each brook that lies

Mid woodland foliage, let that sound be heard ;
Look pleadingly up at him from the eyes

Of all thy flowers, with still that silent word ;
And let him in their fragrant sighs inhale,
With every breath he draws, the same, same tale,—
“God loves thee, Man ! He loves thee !” so his
soul,

All whispered over with thy many tones,
Shall melt before the power that nature owns,
And sink back powerless under my control.'

O God ! we thank Thee that Thy gracious words

Are sometimes set to music such as this,—
Earth's vernal voice, which, swelled with song of birds,
Finds entrance to our heart, and wanders in
To that deep labyrinth's most deep recess,
Bearing them on its flow, that they may win
Their way there too, with all their tenderness.
They linger in that chamber all the year,
And leave their ever-haunting echo there.

A TOWN SEMPSTRESS TO SUMMER.

SUMMER ! I know thou 'rt come again ;
Not by the blowing flowers,
Not by the green arch o'er the lane,
Not by the golden hours,
Not by the cuckoo heard once more,—
But by the heat I must endure,
While toiling in this chair ;—
Not by the soft breeze on my brow,
Perfumed by many a hawthorn bough,—
But by my gasps for air.

By the hot dust that spoils my work,
Whene'er I lift the sash,—
By my relief, when through the murk,
I hear the rain-drops splash.
I know it too by dreams at night,
Of foliage tinged with sunny light,
Still brighter in my love,—

Of forests with their branch-roofed bowers ;—
I wake ; my hands have dropped the flowers
They but 'that instant wove.

There was a time—oh, long ago—
Summer !—there was a time,
When I was watching how they grow,
The wild flowers to their prime.
Among their sweets I stretched my form,
When noonday's languor, deep and warm,
Made stillness everywhere ;
With eyes upturned the sky to view,
Where cloudlets whitely flecked the blue,
Like foam on seas of air.

Summer ! canst thou recall the child,
Who loved thee once so well,—
Who filled at morn with carols wild
The dewy sparkling dell,—
Who going home in evening's cool,
When ended was the village school,
Ran gaily through the corn ;
Or stopped to gather bindweed pale,
Or sweet hedge-roses, bright and frail,
Her ringlets to adorn ?

Ah me ! the past has drawn away
Those times for evermore ;
My summer joys had had their day,
Before my spring was o'er :
Nor e'en a summer rose remains
Upon the cheek so drenched with rains
Of dreary autumn woe ;
No sunshine in these eyes is left,
Of thy dear light so long bereft ;
Thou would'st not know them now.

But time and change can change not thee ;
I know how bright this hour
The red thorn in the sun must be,
Beside the gray church tower.
Thy green leaves gleam adown the glade ;
Thy buttercups have yellow made
The fields I pine to see ;
My vine is green upon the wall ;
The chestnut's tinted blossoms fall
In showers,—as once for me.

The path that leads me from the past
Must be in sadness trod ;

Yet let me on ! I know at last
 It ends beneath the sod :
And I can bear to wander on,
With memories of my summers gone
 Aching within my breast ;
The longest winter ends in spring ;
Beneath all paths of wandering
 Is spread the place of rest.

They shall throw dust upon my face
 Beneath that gray tower's shade ;
Then wilt thou come to see the place,
 Summer, where I am laid ?
Thou knowest well my native scene ;
I used to watch thee make it green,
 In days that are no more ;
So wilt thou come when I am there,
And wear the smile I saw thee wear
 In that dear vale before ?

Wilt thou bring daisies, starry white,
 To scatter o'er the mound,
And make the grass grow long and bright
 Upon the holy ground ?

I'd have thy green leaves round me wave ;
But do not let them veil the grave
 Completely from the sky ;
That angels may look freely down,
And bless me as I lie alone,
 With only Summer by.

Bid that old thorn—if yet it stands—
 Shed fragrance where I lie ;
Bring nightingales from southern lands,
 To sing my lullaby ;
And when thy evening altar fires,
Upon the solemn sunset pyres,
 Are kindled in the west,—
Let some of that pure golden light
Make all the boughs about me bright,
 And rest upon my rest.

The glory of the brightest day
 Will utter darkness be,
The nightingale's entrancing lay
 A voiceless hush to me.
Forgive me if I do not rise,
With fondness in the lightless eyes,
 To thank thee for thy care,—

Forgive me if my love seems cold,
And if thy precious flowers unfold,
 Not greeted as they were.
The slumber must indeed be deep,
 Which is not stirred by thee ;
No other presence near my sleep
 Would so arousing be ;
And I should surely quickly wake,
And from my face the dark mould shake,—
 Did not some Light divine
Put then thy sunshine into shade,
And waken flowers which do not fade,
 And other songs than thine !

BABY LEAVES.

It is a pale spring morn ;
Light plays the clear fresh breeze ;
The baby leaves new-born
Are cradled on the trees.

Each family is furled
In a close-shut bud of green ;
Whence of the outer world
No glimpse may yet be seen.

But happy are they, locked
In infantine embrace,
By zephyr nurses rocked,
And nestling face to face.

"Brother," lisps one, "they say,
When we are older grown,
We must each shoot forth away
Into the air alone.

“Shall you not grieve to part
From the bud where we were nursed ?
I think 'twill break my heart
To see its green walls burst !”

“Ah no !” the other said,
“For I want the world to see,
And the bright sun overhead ;
How I wonder what they'll be !

“Sometimes I have such dreams
Of the sky, and flowers, and light,
And the blue flashing streams ;
But I don't know if they're right.

“I've heard of clouds and showers
In that big world out there,
And dark and stormy hours,—
But I know not what they are.”

It is a bright May morn ;
Soft sighs the fragrant breeze
Over the sweet white thorn,
And gold laburnum trees.

The leaves, in tender green,
Are dancing wild and free ;
Making a living scene
Of loveliness and glee.

The bright sun's sparkling light
Gives them a golden glow ;
It has not yet struck blight
To their fresh sap's running flow.

No chilling rains fall yet ;
But only rainbow showers,
Which earth, as soon as wet,
Sends up again in flowers.

But some, as in a trance,
Gaze round on every side,
"What is yon blue expanse ?"
"What mysteries does it hide ?"

"Whence came yon glorious light ?"
"This wonderful, bright world ?"
Ah, these things are not trite
To young leaves just unfurled !

It is a summer morn ;
 Scarce stirs the sultry air ;
Amid the ripening corn,
 Beneath the sun's hot glare.

Safe stacked is all the hay ;
 The rose is on the bough ;
Spring's bloom hath passed away,
 But the fruit is swelling now.

Upon those leaves alone
 Hath fallen a darker hue !
The tints of spring are gone,
 And its joyous freshness too.

They play not as they played ;
 Too soiled and weary now,
With clinging dust down-weighed
 From parched high roads below.

Lament not if appears
 A time of clouds and rain,
To make them stream with tears,
 And so grow pure again !

It is an autumn morn ;
Loud wails the mournful blast,
As the dead leaves on it borne
Drop slowly down at last.

They would have lingered still ;
But the stalk was old and sere ;
And now this sudden chill
Has laid them lifeless here.

The joyous mates of spring
Have long been borne away ;
Calm they are slumbering,—
Why should the lone ones stay ?

They have had a stormy strife ;
And earth was still through all,
And rest more dear than life,—
Oh, let the weary fall !

Their sleep will know no dream
Of tempests on the plain ;
Yon sunshine's sickly gleam
Will wake them not again.

It is a winter morn ;
 With murky mist made dark ;
And in the ghastly dawn,
 Earth is stretched pale and stark.

Beneath their white snow-tomb,
 The leaves corrupting lie ;
And the dark trees, robed in gloom,
 Stand ever mourning by.

But I know their sleep is warm ;
 And 'neath Spring's shining hours,
The scattered dust will form,
 Perhaps not leaves, but flowers.

SOLILOQUY OF A ROMAN CATHOLIC

IN A PROTESTANT CEMETERY.

A FLOWERY scene !—the roses cling with grace
To mounds and marble urns ;
Forget-me-nots are blooming o'er the place
From whence no thought returns ;—
And still ; this morning sun without the wall,
Which this charmed place defines,
The world to toil and tumult doth recall ;
But here he powerless shines.
And here the form that holds the gayest heart,
Would move with softened tread ;
So to the feeling doth the scene impart
The quiet of its dead.
The insects in the sunshine softly hum,
As not to mar their rest ;
The floating butterfly that dares to come,
Appears with awe possessed.

Ah ! sun by sun may climb to noon's bright steep,
Yet their repose not break ;
And one might muse—'How sound, how long they sleep !
How rested they will wake !
How sweet a resting-place is this, to keep
The slumberers safe from harm !
How blest they be !'—if heaviest seeming sleep
Were always truly calm.

O blue forget-me-nots ! whose upturned eyes
Tear-filled, so mutely plead
The thief's meek prayer, for each who 'neath you lies,
To God,—He will not heed.
Roses ! ye cannot bless these hapless dead,
Whose peace ye seem to tell ;
Your beauty brings no softness to their bed,
No brightness to their cell.
Press downward through the heavy sheets of mould,
To where they lie beneath ;
Lay your soft cheeks upon their faces cold ;
Give them your fragrant breath !
Would it suffice ? Alas ! could this be done,
My voice would call again,
" Come back, O flowers ! come back beneath the sun !
Ye have not reached the pain.

'Twas only rest ye saw ; with all its dreads,
With all its dark and chill,
'Twas but the place of never-aching heads,
And throbbing hearts made still.
Ye have not heard the groans in far-off fire,
Of their deep agony,
Whose peaceful graves oft wake the vain desire
In weariness, to die."

They followed sects,—who scorn the guides to obey,
Ordained to lead them home,
And taking by-lanes for the King's highway,
Now lost and wildered roam ;—
Who, daring to forsake the only Ark,
And on frail rafts to leap,
While in mid-voyage o'er the waters dark,
Must perish in the deep.
Unworthy limbs ! that struggled to be free,
Till from the Body torn,—
Boughs, broken from the stately mustard-tree,
And on each wild wind borne
A moment, yet whose fate must quickly be
To fall and die around,—
Such are the sects ! proclaiming liberty,
Yet with corruption bound.

Ah, lovely spot ! thy calm is but despair,
Which hath no pulse or sound ;
Thy beauty but the smile that woe may wear,
To mask its depth profound.
Thy monuments are cold and desolate,
Without the dear request,
That some the soul's distress will mitigate,
By praying for its rest ;
As prays above the Church of the first-born,
For faithful souls below ;
That the whole family together drawn,
In heaven, on earth, in woe,
Its ties as one community of saints,
Through mutual help may know,
Which those who would not brook its mild constraints
Must evermore forego.
No knee for them has e'er this soil embraced,
No voice has raised its tones ;—
Yet,—something more than name and age is traced
On these sepulchral stones.

“ I would not have you to be ignorant
Concerning them which sleep.”
Sleep ? that is not the fire in which ye pant ;
O lost, for whom we weep !

"I know in whom I have believed ; and He
Can keep my soul indeed."

"I know that my Redeemer liveth." "See,
He lives to intercede."

"To die is gain." "'Tis better to depart,
And be with Christ above."

Ah heretics ! if this was in your heart,
Ye did not doubt His love !

O God ! forgive me that I lift my face,
With wi'd tears streaming o'er,
To breathe a prayer which this bright resting-place
Hath never heard before.

Ah virgin Queen of heaven ! I cannot dare
To supplicate thine aid

In their behalf, whose vain presumptuous prayer
Through thee was never made,—

Who so discrowned that brow which angels fear,
Despised thy grace benign,
And boldly deemed thy Son their voice would hear
As readily as thine.

So Christ ! I trembling come alone to Thee
Yet scorn not Thou my claim ;
For she first won Thy gracious ear for me,
And bade me plead her name.

O Saviour ! when thy blood so long ago
Bedewed Gethsemane,
Showing how deeply thou hadst drunk of woe,
Which none could taste but Thee,—
When they for whom thy soul was travailing,
Contempt upon Thee cast,—
And Death, the shade of sin, his gloomy wing
Closed over thee at last,—
Was not the sharpest pang of all that pain
The agonising thought,
How few would e'er the inheritance attain,
That was so dearly bought ?

Then—by the clemency which bade the sword
Of justice, yet to bide,—
And by the wondrous love which came and poured
Thy own blood's priceless tide,—
By the warm pitying tears which fell for those
Who scorned that boon to share,—
And by the matchless grace which for thy foes
Sighed forth that dying prayer,—
I pray thee Christ ! have pity on these dead,
Who clung in faith to Thee,
And laid down on Thy love their dying head,
And thought Thy grace so free !

Alas ! Thy Bride declares Thou hast no sons,
Save those whom she has borne ;—
Yet wilt Thou doom these alien loving ones,
In endless woe to mourn ?
They loved Thee ; with Thy ransomed flock to stand,
Was all their heart's desire ;
And wilt Thou thrust them, with that piercéd hand,
To everlasting fire ?

I cannot through this cloud the light descry ;
I cannot all things prove ;
I may not doubt the Church, which says they die ;
I may not doubt Thy love.
So Lord, forgive this busy throbbing brain !
And keep my heart sincere ;
That I may soon in heaven that light attain,
Which maketh all things clear.

A MOTHER TO HER BABY IN HEAVEN.

My child ! my tears are almost done, exhaling as they
flow ;

The distant shining of thy crown has made them sparkle
so.

When thou wert scorched by fever, they might fitly
bathe thy brow ;—

I would not have them quench the light that lies around
it now.

Yet am I sad ! the fount of love once opened in my
breast,

Still flows on with a torrent's force, and will not be re-
pressed ;

Its voice, that once went singing all the way I had to go,
Now wails beside me everywhere a ceaseless dirge of
woe.

For I had loved to muse on things which time might
soon have brought,—

Thy childish gambols by my side, thy manhood's serious
thought ;

I seemed to hear the words of love which thou hadst
surely spoken,—

But all my dreams asunder fell ;—the silver cord was
broken !

That tie thus loosed, two worlds reclaimed the part that
each had given ;

The body sank beneath the sod, the spirit rose to
heaven ;

And when I would gaze after thee, there only meets my
view,

In looking down, the veil of green,—or up, the veil of
blue.

That baby form was fair ; the soul as yet lay unre-
vealed,

As lies an embryo blossom in its folded bud con-
cealed.

I wondered what fair colour soon the opening flower
would show ;

But only God and angels see the hue I may not know.

It seemed my Father sent me down a casket firmly
closed,
With information that within, a precious gem reposed ;
Then with quick hand recalled it, ere my glad expectant
eyes
Had looked upon the treasure they so well had learned
to prize.

So better ! there is dust afloat in earth's dim atmosphere ;
Some speck alighteth ever on whate'er is opened here ;
'Tis better I should know thee first in that bright diadem,
Where comes no stain upon the flower, no dulness o'er
the gem.

'Tis I who shall be then the child, by thee in meekness
taught,—
The infant born into thy world, a stranger to its thought ;
And I before the form I nursed shall humbly bow my
head,
And listen, mute with reverence, unto the lips I fed.

Already, doubtless, thou art wise, a senseless babe no
more ;
For though thy soul lay folded here, like sea-weed cast
ashore,

Yet as the weed, in ocean plunged, displays its full
extent,

And every beauteous fibre takes the form that nature
meant,—

So spread at once thy tender soul, when placed in
heaven's bright scene,

And opened to the glorious thoughts that rushed like
water in !

From dreamless infancy it woke, to life celestial first ;
As Adam straight from nothingness to conscious man-
hood burst ;

And now that world has all thy love, as home and
native place,

With its glory for thy sunshine, and its angels for thy
race.

No glimpse of recollection hints that other things have
been ;

Thy memory begins with heaven ; thou know'st no other
scene.

Thou dost not dream that far below all worlds which
thou canst see,

A little corpse lies shadowed by an earthly cypress-
tree.

So, when some unknown hour I come to join thee where
thou art,

Thou wilt not know what mean the marks of pain upon
my heart :

Alas, and I shall be unknown ! thine eyes will turn
away ;—

O Christ, prepare my darling for the meeting of that
day,

I pray thee, Saviour ! tell my child there is a world
below ;

And that its dwellers wear the form to which he kneel-
eth now :

So will he shudder less to hear it is a world of sin,
And look with tenderness on them who thence may
enter in.

And tell him Thou hast loved that world, with love
more strong than death,

And washed those souls with Thine own blood,—revived
them with Thy breath.

Say they are Thine, and enter heaven for God's dear
love to Thee,

So will his arms be opened wide to meet and welcome
me !

A BACHELOR TO HIS FUTURE LADY LOVE.

GENTLE and innocent lonely one,
Stranger as yet to the heart
Where thou wilt soon reign the only one !
Somewhere secluded apart,—
Where will thy sweet face reveal itself,
Sought amid every new throng ?
When will our destiny seal itself,
Waited and watched for so long ?

How shall we meet ?—in society,
Talking on themes of the day,
Formal with strangers' propriety—
Seeking for something to say ?
Or amid Nature's wild scenery,
Free as the birds of the air,
Shall we like them 'midst the greenery,
Straightway instinctively pair ?

Often I think of thee tenderly,
 Guess at thy beautiful face,
And thy fair form, moulded slenderly,
 Moving or resting with grace.
Fancies so charming, when prominent,
 Kindle affections in me ;
Thoughts in my spirit grow dominant,
 Never yet wakened in thee.

Cold in its passionless purity,
 Like a white garden of snow,
Now thy heart sleeps in security,
 Dreams not it hideth below
Flower-roots in winter sterility,—
 Buried in torpor and gloom,—
Waiting to show their fertility,
 When the sweet summer shall bloom.

Yet, doth not something avert in thee
 Life is not all it should be ?
Are not vague yearnings astir in thee,
 Aimlessly asking for me ?
Hopes full of paleness and purity,
 Snowdrops that peep from the snow,

Shyly look out to futurity,

Watching for south winds to blow.

Patience ! the light soon will grow on thee ;

I am thy conquering Sun !

Rays from my warm heart shall glow on thee,

Make all thy vital sap run ;

As I wax daily more powerful,

Young passions budding in thee,

Soon with sweet thoughts shall grow flowerful—

Flowers all turning to me.

A CIRCUITOUS ROUTE.

I SENT some love out once ; but she for whom
It was intended, could not make it room,
And did not draw it home.

So long it hovered o'er her in the air ;
Then rose, and rose, through clearer atmosphere ;
And turning to a prayer,

Arrived at Heaven, and there was taken in ;
And God, who read therein what it had been,
Suffered it thus to win ;—

Into a blessing changed He it again,
And sent it down to her one day of pain,
And she received it then.

A WANDERER'S RETURN.

O CLIFFS, and hills, and woods !
How many suns have risen from yon sea,
How many moons illumined your solitudes,
Since here they shone for me !

We all were wealthy then :
I had my childish fancies,—ye your flowers.
Which frailer ? things to die 'neath tears and rain,
Which fell in after hours.

The heath-bells on your hills,
So purple then, now dust and mould must be ;
The water, then so voiceful in your rills,
Must long have found the sea ;

The world of leaves and flowers,
I loved here then, must long have turned to clay ;
And yet ye show no change ! the tall rock towers
As bright with broom to-day ;—

The soft Virginia sprays,
As greenly cover yon dear cottage side,—
And every hill as rich a robe displays,—
As if they had not died.

To you Time brings no loss :
What one year takes away, the next renews.
Not so he deals with me ; his blind remorse
Restores not what I lose ;

But in its stead presents—
For blinding sunshine o'er the path untrod,
A clearer view thereof,—for some gone hence,
The thought of some with God,

Whose company He willed,—
And hopes like stars, in paleness as in height,—
Affections deeper, if they were but filled !
A world more wide, less bright.

But now that ye appear,
Ye show me all my childhood's soul again ;
As if the thoughts I thought among you here,
Had been collected then,

And treasured up by you ;
While I forsook them, to approach the fret
And toil of life ; so, wandering here anew,
I find them all here yet.

They start from every nook,
With piercing sweetness look from every glen ;
And sing me plaintive songs from every brook
That sang but gaily then.

But, O belovéd scenes !
Since nothing from your own bright wealth is lost,—
Since mine has lost so much, and all it gleans
Is scarcely worth that cost,—

Since I am come once more,
And find these treasures, after my long lack,
Enriching you, who were so rich before,—
Will ye not give them back ?

Will ye not pour each dream
From your soft beauty back into my brain ?
And let my heart with those warm feelings teem ?
And make me child again ?

Ye give me no reply,
Except a mute sad look, which does but say,
" You cannot have them now ; a gift so high
We would not thus betray.

" If we should grant this boon,
And these into the workday world you bore,
'Twould only be afresh to lose them soon,
And never find them more.

" But we will keep them safe ;
And when the world has given thee ill cheer,
When sorrows wound thee, or vexations chafe,
Come back and find them here !

" We shall retain undimmed,
The glory passed from all the earth beside ;
And show thine age thy child-thoughts, undislmined,
As if they had not died.

" And if they first had breath,
Because of childhood's neighbourhood to heaven,
When thou indeed art come there, *via* death,
Such will again be given.

M

“And then thy dreams of light,
When thou in heaven art ten years old anew,
No long increase of age will put to flight,
But only prove them true.”

THE RIVER'S REGRET.

GREAT river ! oh why art thou silent grown ?

Thy smile is bright in the sunset's gleam ;

But why hast thou lost the melodious tone

Of the scenes where a plank might have crossed thy
stream ?

Thou art greater now, and thy course more free,

But where is the music that used to be ?

Art thou dumb with awe at the wealth and power

Of the countries through which thy broad pathway
lies,

Which cover thy banks with town, wharf, and
tower,

And burden thy breast with their argosies ?

Art thou weary of bearing the ships they build ?

Is it ceaseless toil which thy voice hath stilled ?

" Ah no," saith the river, " all praise to these !

But they charm not my voice a new song to learn ;
And the old are left 'neath the woodland trees,

Where I flowed among flowers, and feathery fern.
Now their image hath passed from my pools away,
And music hath died in my heart for aye.

" 'Mid the mountain summits near heaven I rose,
Where its golden-hued glory shines free and bright ;
And I sang my first songs among spotless snows,
Which reflect from their whiteness that sacred light.
But I ran forth leaping ; and did not think,
That to hasten forward was but to sink.

" Yet 'twas only to regions where Nature weaves
Round each young river a bowery glen ;
And the sunbeams, shaken through clustering leaves,
Came down on my bosom like golden rain,
And fairy bridges of rainbow made,
Where the spray-clouds rose o'er the white cascade.

" And other rills that were nursed among
The mountain summits, to meet me sprang ;
And we laughed, and we leaped, and we danced, and we sung,
Till the rocks around with our voices rang ;

And forward—forward—we rushed and raced ;—
Ah ! why such eagerness ? why such haste ?

“ Forget-me-nots over me leaning hung ;—
I recklessly ran from their mute appeal ;
But now no more those sweet scenes among,
Their pleading looks in my heart I feel ;
And backward—backward—I vainly yearn
Toward the paradise whither is no return.

“ I flow amid cities of power and pride ;
And on to the infinite Sea I sweep ;
But my songs are afar on the mountain side,—
In the leafy glen,—by the ferny steep.
I am greater now, and my course more free ;
But where is the Eden that used to be ? ”

NEVER MIND !

“ LIFE and all its tasks are hard ; ”

Never mind !

“ Rarely bringing due reward ; ”

Never mind !

When those tasks are overcome,

For your rest a lovely home

Is assigned.

“ Yearly youth’s warm feelings wane ; ”

Never mind !

“ Never to be felt again ! ”

Never mind !

When you have but reached your home,

All the warmest are to come,

You will find.

“ Barren wastes my vision greet ; ”

Never mind !

“ And the past was flowery sweet ; ”

Never mind !

Though just here the land is poor,

Brighter Edens lie before,

Than behind.

“ Thorns the path have overgrown ; ”

Never mind !

“ And I fall o’er many a stone ; ”

Never mind !

If you can but stumble home,

All your sore wounds wearisome,

ONE will bind.

“ From my side my loved ones slip ; ”

Never mind !

“ I would fain sit down and weep ; ”

Never mind !

They have only hastened on ;

Do not then, their loss to moan,

Stay behind.

“Through yon dark stream I must go ;’

Never mind !

“’Tis a fearful thing to do ;”

Never mind !

When you are but safe at home,

It was worth your while to come,

You will find.

PREMONITIONS.

WHEN the sunset, glory-tinted,
Glow's o'er sky and distant hill,
Through it seems obscurely hinted,
Something lovelier still.

When o'er twilight seas expanding,
Souls with thought dilate and fill,
Soon they yearn beyond, demanding
Something vaster still.

When on stars our vision resteth,
As their courses they fulfil,
All the dark between suggesteth
Something higher still.

Distant bells, suspending laughter
With their soft, pathetic thrill,
Wake an aimless longing after
Something sweeter still.

We, in love terrestrial basking,—
Though no shadow cause a chill,—
Feel ourselves exotics, asking
Something warmer still.

And our own love, weak in saving
The beloved from change or ill,
Oft but wastes our hearts with craving
Something mightier still.

Sleep we need, to ease the burning
Of our many tears, until
Comes, to keep them from returning,
Something calmer still.

Then the grassy sods that house us,
To the sun impervious, will
Show there must appear to rouse us,
Something brighter still.

IN MEMORY OF
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

HEAVEN anointed her with genius ; earth enwreathed
her with renown ;

And her forehead had more feeling of the chrism than
the crown.

She esteemed a poet's office holy as a priest's or
preacher's,—

All its aim the work of God, and not the praises of His
creatures.

Work for Him it was, she thought, to show that Truth,
if truly seen,

Ne'er appeareth meanly clad, but robed and jewelled
like a queen ;—

If her price be more than rubies, pearls, or gold of
Ophir, so

She is bright with golden splendour, pearly fairness,
ruby glow.

Work for Him it was, she thought, to lend to the oppressed and weak,
(Babes or nations,) ringing accents, that the world might
hear them speak,—
To enchant her fellow-prisoners, ransomed, but not yet
set free,
With bright guesses at the landscape which ere long
they all should see,—
And meanwhile to lift their drooping faces toward the
glimpse of sun,
Dimly shining through the grating. Then, if these e'er
cried "Well done!"
All her thought was, that if afterward her Lord should
say the same,
Adding "good and faithful servant,"—*that* were honour
worth the name.

How should man repay the offering given to God in
sacrifice?
Man? he hath no right nor power; nay, he little counts
its price.
Ah, cold world! that lov'st to see and warm thee at
poetic fire,
Know that poets' hearts are fuel for the flames thou dost
admire:

Yet they cast them on the altar, there like incense to
consume,
Well content to immolate them, so the temple win
perfume.

Of those hearts, so rich and mellow, oft the life-blood
must be spent,
Must be crushed out in the wine-press, left in secret to
ferment,
Ere man's soul to warm and strengthen, they the costly
wine produce ;
Yet it was for this they ripened, and they would not
miss their use.

Use have they who stoop in mire, to raise the fallen lest
they die ;
Also they who mount on pinions, leading higher yet the
high.
This may be as toilsome service ; for the clouds are not
a nest ;
Spite of rose-tints and of gold-tints, there no weary
wing may rest.

O thou lark ! erewhile so tuneful, climbing cloudward
after light,—

Art thou sunk down in the green sward? or gone up
to such a height

That our ear can strain no longer? Idle questions! for
this bird,

If a sky-lark, was a caged one, and the music that we
heard

Was its nature's captive striving for a songful skyward
flight.

Now 'tis flown;—but into trackless and impenetrable
night—

Into dark and silent vastness; and we know not where alit.
But we know the morrow's sunrise will reveal a world
to it,

New, and wide, and glorious: then from grassy rest
'twill doubtless rise,

With a new song of rejoicing, far aloft to cloudless skies.

Even here this soul found rapture, such as thrills the
nightingale,

Charming hours of gloom to sweetness with its own
pathetic wail.

Shut up in a darkened chamber, she beheld dissolving
views

Clothe her walls with brighter scenes than their opaque-
ness made her lose,—

Earthly pictures melting strangely into heavenly, line
by line,—

Fading under light celestial, breaking into forms divine ;
All accompanied with music, mournful, rapturous, or
serene ;—

Yet how vainly pictures shadow forth a country never
seen !

As departed poet-souls review the works, which earth's
esteem

Sets so high, how poor and scanty, how abortive must
they seem !

“ All our visions were through veils,” they say, “ or
should a glimpse unfold,

Then our voice sank choked and broken, and the half
was left untold ! ”

She we mourn, essayed all strains of earthly love, and
woe, and bliss,

Earthly beauty—marvel—mystery ; and not content
with this,

Guessed at Heaven's, in high conjecture—grand sugges-
tion—mystic dream,

Falling back in faltering sweetness, hopeless of the
unreached theme.

Burning thoughts, that rushed like rockets up to pierce
the dark unknown,—

Paused,—and breaking in a shower of coloured gems,
came trembling down.

Revelations past our guessing, all her guesses now
dispel.

Now she shares celestial secrets, and, alas ! she keeps
them well.

They who to yon prospect chambers vanish up the dark-
some stair,

Call not down how free the light is, and how fair the
views are there.

Yet one exclamation, as this climber out of hearing
passed,

Reached the ear of love close listening, “It is beautiful !”
—the last.

Now, while for itself, her spirit to the spirit-land belongs,
Still for us, on earth it lingers, prisoned in its own old
songs.

These still pulsate with our life terrestrial,—sorrow with
its woes,

Chafe against its limitations,—yearn expectant toward
its close.

Though their author has outstripped them, they will
still, from age to age,
Keep the pace, and bear the burdens, of the souls on
pilgrimage ;
Never gladder, never wiser,—though the years to cen-
turies grow,—
For the joys and the disclosures God hath caused her
own to know.

Joys? “He giveth His belovéd, *sleep!*” ’twas that she
counted gain.
Ay, but while His opiate lulls the flesh, and puts an end
to pain,—
On the soul it opens visions, makes it in a scene to
dwell,
Bright with more than Jacob’s angels ; as she yet will
wake to tell.

At that waking, on the morning of the last and great
Lord’s-day,
They that slept will rise rejoicing that their work is put
away,—
Weary work of mill and market, oft defiling, hard, and
long,—

Giving place to rest and worship, with a clean and
bright-robed throng.

As for choristers, however, who the general voice shall
lead,

In the week they did but practise ; now they do their
work indeed.

Christ shall recompense His soldiers ; not the least that
tuneful band,

Who with all His army marching to the very far-off land,
Drew their comrades on with music,—plaintive for their
wounds and pain,—

Spirit-stirring as their warfare,—grand with triumph
they should gain,—

Sounding full unto the foremost, with each note intense
and sweet,—

Faintly caught e'en by the hindmost, 'midst distracting
tramp of feet,

Feeling still their footsteps quickened by the drum's far-
throbbing beat.

That same band shall play thereafter in the palace of
their King,

Festive strains, to make the chamber of His marriage-
banquet ring.

Inspiration shall not end, for them who come its Foun-
tain nigher ;

Not in God's immediate presence, can His grandest gifts
expire.

If the singing of His praises all Eternity prolongs,
Strains of poet and musician shall supply the endless
songs.

On the earth they were but training, art's sublimer
heights to climb,

And to learn a style more perfect, when the Master
thought it time.

If this dimness, and this scantness, and this fault, could
wake their skill,

How that glory, and that fulness, and that consumma-
tion, will !

Wintry gleams on barren branches, call forth chirps, not
clear or strong ;

But the sun-bright May-green forests teem with full and
perfect song.

Then if right employ of talents, God with greater shall
repay,

She now lost, will rule ten cities, full of souls that feel
her sway ;—

With new feelings throbbing in the rhythms, ringing in
the rhymes,
Of some new celestial language, grandly sweet as
minster chimes,—
To new heights of heavenly thought, with rapturous
widening vision, soar,
Followed by a train of spirits,—upward—upward—
evermore !

Neither death nor resurrection is our being's final goal :
Transformations are but stations in the progress of the
soul.

Who shall dare to set a period to its infinite ascent,
As from strength to strength it goes, with endless new
astonishment,—
Tending ever towards its Maker, through the grades of
seraphim,—
Never lessening the distance still between itself and
Him ?

THE PRAYER OF ALL NATIONS.

PART I.

May 1st, 1851.

THE land yet showed the wave-worn marks, wherewith
the Flood had graved it,
When Earth's one nation was convened to mock the God
that saved it.
They met around a lofty tower, whose proud front
dared aspire
To reach the pure but awful heaven, which still kept
calmly higher,—
When lo ! their single mother tongue to many separated ;
And to the same idea each mind a different word dic-
tated !
With a discordant clash, the links of common speech
fell shattered ;
And bound no more in unity, their purposes were
scattered.

They were one race ! from kindred eyes, were mournful
farewells spoken,
When the eye's language was the sole that earth retained
unbroken :
Resembling cheeks grew pale, and close-knit hearts with
terror fluttered,
As from the answering lineaments, unanswering sounds
were uttered :
And angels looked down from their songs, which could
not cease from blending ;
So strangely rose the various speech, from earth's one
race ascending !

The streams that from one fountain sprang, were severed,
thence emerging ;
And from each other turned aside, went on through
earth diverging.
The blood which might not mix again, flowed down
through parted races,
Inscribing varied characters upon the alien faces.
'Twas only when the trump was blown, and war's red
beacon lighted,
That, flowing o'er the same dark sod, it might be re-
united.

So never met the nations more, exchanging kindred
glances,
Nor let their hands approach within the measure of
their lances ;
Till in the latter days, a princely spirit meditated,—
“ And must they live, and grow, and work, for ever
separated ?
Nay let them now come face to face, and show to all
men’s senses,
How grand a unity results from many differences.
Let them display how each alone has sped on man’s
great mission,—
To conquer Nature’s wealth, and bend her powers to
his volition,—
And then from this new starting-point go forward,
proving whether
They cannot speed each other’s march by keeping step
together.
May their first thought be gratitude for blessings God
has granted ;
Their next, that to make use of these, their mutual aid is
wanted.”
Then England sent her voice abroad ; and joyfully obeying,
Around her gentle sovereign’s throne, all nations
gathered, praying !

They met beneath a crystal roof, which let the noontide
splendour

Flow brightly down, and bring from heaven its smile of
welcome tender ;—

They met among the leaves of spring, betokening an era
Of fairer life, and fresher growth, and fuller light come
nearer ;—

They met, diverse in face and mien, the nations Babel
parted,

Remembering but how God at first had fashioned them
like-hearted !

They parted there in shame and grief ; forsaking, un-
completed,

Their mighty task, a monument to show their aim
defeated :

They met now here in pride and joy ; each, to his
praising neighbour,

Displaying in successful hands, some fair and finished
labour.

And she who filled the central place, received with com-
mendation,

The splendours spread before her face by each exultant
nation ;

Which formed, combined, a gorgeous show, the fruit of
all the ages,

Brought slowly to this ripe result by long and patient stages.

It seemed that re-united band said, each to all the others,
“ Behold the things I have achieved, since we were parted, brothers !

Since we, so very long ago, beneath that fatal Babel,
Were taught, by sore disgrace and loss, that man is all unable

To accomplish aught his heart conceives, if God forbear to bless it.”

And England added to the thought, “ Let us to Him confess it !

Since all these things our hands have made, we know by that old story,

Are gifts of Him who gave the power, to Him be all the glory !”

Then rose the prayer—“ Almighty God ! without whom naught is holy,

And naught is strong,—accept, we pray, our adoration lowly.

We feel 'tis only of Thy grace that we are here permitted

To meet this day, by one great scheme, in peace together knitted.

For 'tis of Thee, that wasting strife approaches not our
borders,

That nations lift the sword no more, and cease from
war's disorders ;

And 'tis of Thee, and by Thy help, and through Thine
inspirations,

That all these works have been produced by these
assembled nations.

Then while we see the marvels which beneath this roof
surround us,

Oh, let us not forget 'tis Thou, who with success hast
crowned us !

Help us to know, that while to Thee our humble thanks
we tender,

For all this wealth our hands have got, 'tis but Thine
own we render :

And may the nations who now stand, their debts to
Thee confessing,

Receive from Thine unwearied hand, Thy promised
greater blessing.

May we together presently the heavenly things inherit,
Which are prepared for us by Thee, and bought by
Jesus' merit."

To hail that prayer, upon the spot burst forth triumph-
ant singing !

Loud hallelujahs down the crystal nave and aisles ran
ringing !

The Lord Omnipotent proclaimed to reign among the
nations

So oft disloyal, was received with tuneful acclamations !
And through the whole wide world, a breathless awe and
pleasure fluttered ;

As from the differing features, one united voice was
uttered !

Again paused angels in their songs, to hear what Earth
was saying,

So strangely rose the blended speech of many nations,
praying !

PART II.

May 1st, 1862.

O princely spirit ! since thou wouldst behold that scene
repeated,

Those listening angels prayed this time to have thee
with them seated :

Then, having left thee long enough below to make all
certain,

With beckoning hand they called thee up behind their
azure curtain,
Whence thou, unseen, may'st see how looks the scene
from yon high places,
And hear how sounds above, the voice of Earth's as-
sembled races.

How *does* it sound there? Here below, we think it
strikes but sadly ;
Earth cannot choose, but grieve to lose what Heaven
receives so gladly.
“ A thousand voices full and sweet,” uplifted in thanks-
giving,
Sink suddenly into a wail,—a wail for dead and living !
The scene is bright ; yet in the midst a dimming
shadow hovers,—
The prospect glorious, yet one cloud too much its glory
covers

Amidst the state authorities,—those mountain heights
which tower
Above our lands rich fields of toil, in guardianship and
power,—
O'ertops their massive grandeur, and convergent range
uneven,—

A central head of soft pure snow, with nothing higher
but Heaven.

A thousand vales, long summer days, have seen it shine
serenely,

Surmounting many a rolling cloud, as silverly and
queenly,

As if none e'er could float so high, that *it* should e'er
be clouded ;—

But this chill mist has done it now, and from our sight
'tis shrouded.

God makes our mountain to stand strong ; but all our
guests now bidden,

Have found, although 'tis mainly clear, the highest
summit hidden !

They come, with choicest fruits of toil once more their
hands adorning,

And worship on their lips. Thus runs their common
prayer this morning :

“ O Lord ! we thank Thee for the gifts which Thou to
us hast given ;

Though not without a darksome cloud, appears this
day's bright heaven.

Teach us to recognise all woes as Fatherly correc-
tion ;

And do more zealously our work, as under Thine inspection.

O Thou! who did'st of old divide the heavens, and earth,
and ocean,

And stored them all with wealth, designed for human
joy's promotion,—

Who madest man of dust and breath, in skill and taste
excelling,

Appointing unto every race, its task and place of dwelling,—

Yet broughtest them in ships, to view each other's habitations,—

We pray Thee, bless this interchange of gifts among all
nations!

O Father! take away the bars that now obstruct our
union;

Bring them who share one blood within Thy Church's
one communion.

O Son of God, and Prince of Peace! quell all our strife
unholy,

And stir us up to rivalry in works of goodness
solely.

Spirit of holiness and love! unite mankind as brothers;
That all may serve the common weal, in serving one
another's."

What, Nations ! did ye not go home,—your former
pageant ended,—

With all your mutual hurts forgiven, and all your rup-
tures mended ?

Did ye not then forbid fierce war, your hearts again to
sever,

And letting drop both sword and gun, clasp friendly
hands for ever ?

Are ye not shamed, to pray thus now for peace and
reconcilement,

While war's grim weapons almost blot this pure scene
like defilement ?

Alas ! alas ! not yet are all delivered from oppres-
sion ;

Not yet hath every patriot race its own land in posses-
sion ;

Not yet are all the liberties achieved, the powers all
trusted ;

Not yet are all the rights secured, and all the claims
adjusted.

So, though again, from time to time, ye may as now
assemble,

Not yet will ye drop arms, and cease to make each
other tremble.

'Tis only when the weak all find that right rules all the
stronger,

That righteousness and peace shall meet, and man learn
war no longer.

Yet, Nations, trust the prophecy of Spring ! to-day as
glorious,

As on that May-day past, o'er each new winter still vic-
torious.

Eleven since have spoiled the earth ; yet still the leaves
emergent,

Renew her with their lovely life, invincibly resurgent.

Nor is it but to fill the wastes of winter, they aspire,

As countless trees can testify, with every spring built
higher.

Responsive to your plaintive prayer, exultant choral
voices,

As numerous tenfold as before, declare how Faith
rejoices

Already in the long result. Though Hope sinks faint
and doubting,—

Faith bears her up on eagle wings, bold Hallelujahs
shouting,—

Sings how they both shall soar, till lost in light, they
vanish wholly,

And 'midst all nations of the saved, eternal Love reigns
solely.

"The kingdom of this world is Christ's;" the solemn
notes assever,

"NOW KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS; and He
shall reign for ever!"

"Amen! amen!" rings on the strain, in expectation
certain,—

Swelled doubtless by unheard Amens behind the azure
curtain!

Go back, O Nations! to your works, and to your wars if
need be;

Yet rest and peace, of toil and strife, shall the eternal
meed be:

Your twice-breathed prayer for unity, in Heaven is safe
recorded;

And soon or late, fulfilment shall completely be
afforded.

For in the Kingdom not yet come, ye, to one Crown sub-
jected,

Shall all meet finally, once more around one Throne
collected:

And then by Him who sits thereon, your works shall be
commended,

As at His feet ye lay them down, not only good, but
ended !

As He o'er His completed world, so ye with joy ecstatic,
Shall o'er your finished tasks rejoice, and enter rest
Sabbatic.

Around your meeting, the new earth shall bloom in
beauty vernal ;

And in the midst, the Tree of Life break forth in leaf
eternal.

With Angels and Archangels then, and all their strings
sonorous,

Ye shall in greater power strike up your Hallelujah
Chorus !

O Queen ! who on earth's highest throne with grace
so gentle sittest,—

On whose benign and stainless brow earth's brightest
crown shines fittest,—

Whose realms are lightened by a sun that on them
setteth never,

Like that domain whose brighter Sun shall go not down
for ever,—

'Twas grand, when Earth so long had felt the labour-
curse in rigour,

To bid her for the first time pause, and that great scene
prefigure !

When thou art sitting higher still, above our vision
yonder,

And thy fond land is left in tears, thy memory to ponder,
The sweetest elegy that man can speak, thy reign surveying,

Will be, " 'Twas first around *her* throne, all nations
gathered, praying ! "

And though *thy* sun has sunk at noon, thy day to
twilight turning,

Songs to laments, this second feast of nations into
mourning,—

The greater Feast to come shall be by nothing disconcerted,

Arranged by God. Ah, thence thou wilt not turn with
face averted !

But—with the Sun that sets no more, upon thy scene
ascended,—

Thy God thine everlasting light,—thy days of mourning
ended,—

Thy lost one at thy side,—shalt see, with him, his aspiration,

The UNITY OF MAN, at last, attain its consummation.

VOICE OF THE SEA.

WHAT means this tale, O Sea !
Which thou hast told the earth since she was made ?
A long and patient hearing hast thou had ;
And even yet thou wilt not let her be.

The bare hills edged the strand,
Wherein was never sound of human speech,
When thy first breaker, falling on the beach,
Began the tale we cannot understand.

Thou hast seen tower and hall,
And city, rise since then with tumult loud,—
And gather ivy round them for a shroud,—
And sink into the silence waiting all.

Trees have withstood thy breeze,
Which saw with thee how many a century passed ;
Another ever rising o'er the last ;—
But thou hast seen the same befall the trees.

The hills are scarred by man,
Though years passed o'er them, and could leave no trace ;
But thou, each moment varying thy face,
Art now the same as when the world began.

So long hath sounded here
Thy voice, O Sea ! repeating to the stones
One changeless tale, though said in many tones ;—
Now half-subdued, as if in bashful fear,

At urging it once more :
Now, when the summer sunbeams on thee lie,
Thou seemest to repose, and lazily
Murmur thy waves their message to the shore ;—

Now passionate again,
They boom as if to storm Earth's reckless ear,—
Now sorrowful because she will not hear,
Sob forth all wearily the long refrain.

And is the yarn not spun ?
Earth cannot comprehend ; her ear is chill.
Why art thou doomed to moan it round her still,
E'en when she lies asleep, her day's work done ?

Her lamps shine mutely down
Along thy foam ; her children sleeping lie ;
Above there, bends the calm and silent sky ;
Why shouldst thou only palpitate and moan ?

The night will yet pass o'er,
The century close, upon thy murmur low.
What is it, then, which thou wouldst have us know ?
The weight of treasures on thy sunless floor,

Where no eye comes in quest ?
The lonely vastness of thine azure realm,
Where league-long waves each other overwhelm ?
Or lieth so uneasy in thy breast,

All thou from earth hast ta'en ?
Ah, Sea ! too rich, indeed, are thy deep caves ;
For, of the bright forms sunk beneath thy waves,
Sun, moon, and stars are all that rise again !

Yet—in that solemn chime,
Some holier secret surely hideth still.
Does yet thy voice with the remembrance thrill,
Of that strange moment at the birth of time,

When, 'midst thy primal sleep,
There came God's Spirit moving on thy breast,
And shook thee, trembling, from thy glassy rest,
In quivering waves, which still pulsating keep ?

Ye two were all alone ;
The embryo earth beneath lay dark and cold.
What wast thou in that wondrous contact told ?
What whispers didst thou hear of things unknown,

Which filled the heart of God,
Before the first world on its axis turned ?—
An infinite but lonely Love that yearned ?—
A purpose under all things lying broad ?

Ah, well thy tones may be
Mysterious ! charged with meaning too profound
For thee to shape aright, or us to sound.
Thou art but like the human soul, O Sea !

When, with great thoughts oppressed,
Which the same Spirit through its voice would teach,
It can but hint them forth in broken speech,
And seems to utter but its own unrest.

GROWING PAINS.

O POET land ! O poet land !
I dimly see thy gleaming shore ;
And flowers come floating to my hand,
Which restless waves have drifted o'er.
Yet rolls a sea between
My spirit and thy scene.

Nature, and Time, and Life,
Hold many mysteries sealed ;
Whence voices, with vague whispers rife
Flow round my soul in eddying strife,
With meanings unrevealed.
Sometimes doth some warm fancy throw
Upon my heart a crimson glow,
As if a large rose o'er it leant,—
Or a strong thought rushes past,—
And my soul is swiftly bent
Like a grass blade in the blast.

Yet fail I still to turn to sound
The wondrous glories lying round.
My soul for beauty is too small ;
A flower-cup oft may hold it all ;
How far then is the world outside
For *its* capacity too wide !
Stars are too high for my weak song,
The lake too deep, the stream too strong,
I feel it bear my thoughts along,
And dash them on its reckless rocks,—
And still rush on with whitened shocks,
 As it had done no wrong.
The eyes of flowers, pure and deep,
 Look on me wondering ;
Amid the beauteous things I weep ;
 I cannot sing !

 I would my soul were wide
As the landscape's broad expanse,
 Outstretched on every side
 Beneath the sun's bright glance,
With all fair things thereon displayed,
Till by the round horizon stayed !

 I would my soul were wide
As a great mountain view !

Where earth's broad round is amplified,—
And the distance looms more blue,—
And the dim boundaries yield
A still enlarging field, -
And the mountain ripples lie
Like a purple ocean round,
(White crests on those most high,)
Extending till the sky
Descends to meet the ground.
I would my soul were wide,
To cleave that meeting line,
And 'twixt the parted edges glide
To all the lands on either side,—
To the north, where shoots the pine,—
To the south, where spreads the palm,—
Expanding over earth's broad breast ;
Where Nature blends her work and rest
In one eternal calm ;
And o'er them chants a psalm,
Of purposes attained,
And destiny fulfilled ;
While man, with sinews strained,
And tumult never stilled,
Doth send forth ever-fretting sounds
Of something wrong—of something wrong,—

Of something fallen and undone,—
Of something unachieved, unwon,—
Breaking the low and lovely rounds
 Of Nature's endless song.
I would my soul were wide,
 To reach o'er all the globe,
And clasp it as a spreading robe
 E'en to the further side,
Its toils and sorrows covering ;—
 Then would I sing !

I would my soul were deep,
 To pierce beneath the ground ;
 Where lies a land of sleep
 In night and silence bound,—
Where swell the seeds, undreamt-of yet
 In the upper scene of bloom,—
Where the tall oak tree's roots are set,
 Deep winding through the gloom,—
 Where, after summer showers,
 The rain-drops trickle through ;
 But bring no smile of flowers,
 No captured rainbow hue,
To win their way among the chilly clods,
 And through the clinging sods.

Still down!—still farther in!—
Where the water-springs begin,
And move like things of life
Imprisoned in a grave,
Where comes no breezy strife
No sparkle on the wave.
I would my soul were deep,
To penetrate the mould
To where the soulless bodies sleep,—
And in their vesture grave-worms creep
Through each damp blackened fold;—
And the faces are not read aright,—
And from the eyes hath sunk the light,—
And the ear no sound hath heard,—
And the lip hath said no word,—
And the lights are all put out
In the soul's deserted room,
Where not a thought is left about
To glimmer in the gloom.
(O souls! from distant bliss,
Say, do ye look on this?)
I would my soul were deep,
To cleave yet further down,—
And still with prophet power to sweep
On through those depths unknown,

Where earth has other graveyards hid,
The silence of her heart amid,—
Where forms, which on the surface trod,
When man was but a thought of God,

Have slept, surviving life,
'Neath all his years of strife ;
And lie, like scattered dates
On which no reader waits,

In every stratum's claspèd page,
The record of a former age.

I would my soul were deep,
To strike earth's inmost part,—
And wake the mysteries there asleep,
Enshrouded in her heart,—
And sound at last those hidden wells
Where Truth's eternal current swells,—
And from their deep recess of night,
The living waters bring,
All sparkling as they touched the light.—
Then would I sing !

I would my soul were high,
As a great mountain peak !
Where billowy clouds that roll thereby,
Like white surf, touch and break,—

And earth with golden mist is drowned,—
And rainbow fragments float around,—
And the air is filled with wandering beams,
 As the tranced heart with dreams :—
 Or where, in other hours,
 The storm-wind holdeth sway,—
And tempests of impetuous showers,
 Rend through the mist their way,—
And thunders gain a deeper sound
 From every crag's rebound,—
 And clouds around, beneath,
 Weave a dark flashing wreath
 Around the rocky throne,
 Where glory sports alone,
 Amid the hail's wild fall,
 From regions over all !
 I would my soul were high,
 As the realm above the storm,
Where in a blue unsullied sky
 A changeless sun broods warm,
And earth's most stormy clouds below,
Their upper side of sunshine show.
 I would my soul were high,
 To pierce the yielding sky,
 Till Earth, a shining round,

Drew close her circling bound,—
And shrinking, sinking down,
Grew smaller to the view,—
And the sun intenser shone,
With no surrounding blue.—
I would my soul were high,
Far upward yet to fly,
To where both sun and earth, in space,
As star and planet, take their place,—
And the starry hemispheres embrace.
Still higher !—through the night
To where those specks of light
Are thinner,—thinner strown,—
Till dies the last faint spark,—
And God exists alone
Amid the boundless dark.
I would my soul were high,
As the realm no eye hath sought,
Where the fleshless spirits fly,—
And the space is filled with thought,—
Nor sight nor sound is seen or heard,—
And earth a far off isle doth seem,—
And earthly life a glimmering dream,—
And death an empty word.
I would my soul were high,

To touch those regions nigh,
Where shines the glory of the King ;—
Then would I sing !

I would my soul were large,
With mighty vision clear,
To reach Creation's marge,—
To scan Truth's perfect sphere,—
To press through every bound,
To the Light that lies around !
If this Eternity could bring,
Then would I sing !

SONNETS.

P

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ILLUSION OF DISTANCE.

IN youth we tread the margin of a field,
With sunny golden-coloured flowers bedight.
We pluck the nearest, bounding with delight ;
But, lifting up our eyes, we see revealed
The whole broad surface, which must surely yield
Yet finer blooms than these ; and to our sight
They seem to grow afar most thick and bright,—
The turf beneath their golden mass concealed.
So breathlessly we hurry o'er the space,
Dropping the flowers first gathered as we go :
But having got across, we find they grow
As thinly there. Then looks our starting-place
A golden mass ; and still, not taught aright,
Exclaim we, "*Yonder* grow they thick and bright !"

LOVE'S INUNDATION.

WHEN o'er thy heart's neat garden, like a tide
Which overflows, comes rushing mighty Love,
Thou dost but smile to see it rise above
The growths which years had made there, and so hide
The peaceful joys of home, and friends long tried,
The charms of art, and hopes yet in the bud,
Beneath its sudden, all-submerging flood,
Whereon strange lights and mystic shadows glide.
Yet smile not so ! for should it yet be dried,
'Twill not disclose the flowers it covers now,
But show their roots, uptorn and swept aside,
And leave thy heart a dank, discoloured slough.
Many a sunny day must then pass o'er
That ruined garden, ere it blossom more.

DEPTH OF LOVE.

SOME love lies on the heart, as doth a stain
Of a bright fruit upon a crystal vase.
Wouldst wash it forth ? a full warm flow of tears,
Poured o'er it, soon will leave all clear again.
And some is like a tint so deep in grain,
That such a baptism will but show more pure :
The vase must suffer laceration sore,
Ere purged from that imprinted colour plain,—
And show a shining surface nevermore.
And some—ah some !—is like an inwrought hue,
That laceration will but bring to view ;
And utter breaking, visibly explain
How it pervades the substance through and through,
And ever in the fragments must remain.

EDEN FLOWERS.

ADAM was driven forth from Eden's gate ;
And all his children, feeling some vague lack,
Go searching—searching—till they find a track
By which they may return ; and soon or late,
By many paths, some devious, some straight,
They to the guarded portal all come back.

But there they may in vain their sinews rack
To force an entrance ; long they strive and wait ;
Yet cannot move the bars they gaze between.

Sometimes the angels throw them, for a boon,
A few plucked flowers which grew in that bright scene ;
A tantalizing gift ! they wither soon ;
And make the wilderness they die upon,
Look drearier than its native thorn had done.

DREAMS.

THE soul in youth is wrapped in visions bright,
As a hill-peak in golden mists at dawn ;
And very bare 'tis left, when they, withdrawn,
Dissolve in air,—or, if they keep in sight,
Rise out of reach, to some more heavenly height.
When lucid truth dispels romantic dreams,
Too fair to miss the bright enchantment seems,
As when clear day puts morning dreams to flight.
We close our eyes again, the light refuse,
And strive to carry on the vision's play :
Alas, in vain ! no effort then renews
The broken spell,—the light will have its way,
And we must wake ;—and yet the dream we lose,
May be a haunting sweetness all the day.

REALITIES.

BELIEVE not them who say, "Realities
Are duller than thy dreams : " O loving one !
Whose glowing hopes are darkened and undone.
For what so real as love ? Say, would the trees
Call winter " real," when their vitalities
Lie darkly sleeping, visible to none ?
Or summer, when beneath a golden sun,
They feel the mantling verdure greet the breeze ?
And thou, whose rosy summer blighted sore,
Hath left thee but the pallid winter light,
And old dark evergreens, for evermore,—
Believe that yet, for flowers and foliage bright,
The leafless branches of thy heart were meant ;
And that " real life " in them, must such present.

WINTER AND SPRING.

YET is of winter, as of summer, need.

The shrinking life, drawn inward to its Root,

There hidden—resting—doth its force recruit,

Safe cherished until spring the way shall lead :

Then issuing forth, from sleep and darkness freed,

Shall bud, and break, from every point forth-shoot,

And shape itself in leaf, and flower, and fruit,

Till the new summer's growth the old exceed.

Then through the colourless and cold-struck days,

Have patience ; be content ; long out of leaf ;

Enjoy the misty sunshine, rare and brief.

If but thy root-life prosper, spring *must* raise

And quicken all ; and thee that bloomy time

May find transplanted to a warmer clime.

DEEP WATERS.

“WHY trust in God?” you ask, “since all the same,
Deep woes o’erwhelm me?” so an ocean weed
Might say, ‘Why clasp this rock?’ and doubting plead
That all the same the waves above it came.
Yet cling, frail weeds! the closer, since ye name
Such floods, which else would toss you without
heed,
And tear you, sweep you clean away, with speed.
Now, shaken by their force through all your frame,
Ye must, indeed, endure the long dark tide;
But at its ebb, ’twill leave you in the sun;
And when your salt-drops are run off, or dried,
Ye may perceive what good ye thence have won.
For ’tis to those recurring floods ye owe
The nourishment, whereby your graces grow.

LOSS OVERBALANCED.

THOU lovest well to sit beneath thy bower,
With sunshine breaking through its leaf and bloom,—
Around it, songs of birds and flowers' perfume,—
Which win but freshness from each passing shower.
Yet count not all things lost, if some dark hour,
A windy tempest dash the whole to doom ;
For though the heavens first show themselves in
gloom,
And rain on thine unsheltered head with power,
The clouds will pass ; and then a glorious scene
Will open to thine eyes,—the vast serene,
With sunsets, stars, and depths of holy blue :
More worth thine upward gaze than that gay green,
The pretty wreathings of whose leafy screen,
Concealed the loftier glories from thy view.

TO A NOVEL.

I LENT myself to thee some few hours' space ;
And thou hast carried me through many a year,
Diverse with grief and joy, and hope and fear ;
A railway in thy thin black lines we trace,
Whereby, ensconced at ease, we rush apace
Through life's wide land, and see, in fleet career,
Its varied scenes flit past, and disappear.
A rustic hamlet is the starting-place,—
Then through rich fields—then through a waste—we
dart ;
Next comes a tunnel with no light ahead,—
And through we fly to light,—and next a mart,—
A garden, bright with flowers,—a place of dead,—
Then lo, the terminus ! upright we start ;
And where are all those hurrying visions fled ?

ON READING "THE SAINT'S TRAGEDY."

THEY sought to make thee "perfect," long-crowned
Saint ;

And therefore took thy heart, by God create,
And each affection thence did amputate,
And crushed its vital growth 'neath stern constraint,
Then brought thee unto Him, all torn and faint.

Was that perfection ? Would a lily be
More perfect flowerless ? If thy page to thee
Had brought a stripped and broken stem, to acquaint
Thine eyes, how all its leaf and bloom were shed,
Crying, " 'Tis perfect ! " wouldst thou not have said,—
" Not thus God made it ; thou His work hast spoiled " ?

Poor tortured heart ! a nobler work wert thou,
Which He would see to the completion grow
Of its own nature, wherefore hast thou toiled ?

PURGING THE BRANCHES.

God trains His own saints, branches of His Vine :
And oft, indeed, His knife will cast around
Their greenest growths, all leafy, to the ground,
Though these were graceful, lovely, healthy, fine,
Their life deriving from that Plant divine,
Which bleeds anew through all their wounds. 'Tis
found,
Such treatment makes the fruit with sap abound ;
And, lightening verdure that would o'er it twine,
Delivers it to Heaven's sweet air and shine.
But oh ! great Husbandman, let no hand try
To prune, or on Thy trellis crucify,
Our tender, quick, if straying shoots, but Thine !
Lest some the knife or nails should misapply,
And e'en the fruit, through rude unskill, decline.

SAINTSHIP.

Is saintship worth no struggle? True, to climb
To those white heights, is toilsome, painful, hard ;
With blistering air the visage must be marred ;—
Yet see their lofty purity sublime !
Alas ! theirs looks a barren, wintry clime ;
And they scarce higher can seem, in Heaven's regard,
Than vales, by that self-lifting but debarred
From the due verdure of their summer time.
And whence such verdure, but that heaven's warm light
Sinks to the vales, where orchards feel its cheer,
And vines, and fields, round sheltered homesteads
 dear ?
Why toil to seek it then on yon cold height ?
There, may indeed the earth far down appear ;
But wilt thou therefore find the Heavens more near ?

SAINTLINESS.

CLIMB not of thine own choice, from high disdain
Of lowly places ; yet if it be true
That God hath called thee, as He calls a few,
Away from warmth and greenness, to attain
Prospects, which only through such loss thou'lt gain,
Then mount,—and though chill mists thy form bedew,
Perplex and dim thy path, in passing through,—
Though thou tread snows, and meet the hurricane,—
Thou'lt reach at last so full and vast a view,
That earthly things seem small, and faint in hue.
Then, if more clouds roll past, they'll roll below,
Shutting earth out, but leaving Heaven all blue.
And for the very blankness of the snow,
Will sweeter show thereon, a heaven-caught glow.

DIVISIONS OF THE CHURCH.

ALAS that this fair ship, which went from port,
Crowded with precious souls, and sails all set,
With contrary winds of doctrine should have met !
Far from the City of the Monarch's Court,
She strikes, the strain unable to support :
The fore part rests, where first it ran aground,
Immovable ; and fragments strewn around,
Show how strong waves make of the hinder sport.
Saviour ! to Thee in our distress we call ;
Thou know'st we love not this dismemberment ;
And as we tearfully put off with Paul,
On shapely pieces from the vessel rent,
Or shapeless boards,—we take them as we may,—
Let us all safely reach the land, we pray !

ENGLISH LOYALTY.

LEEDS, *September 7, 1858.*

YE who misprize it for an idle tale,
See how o'er free-born hearts this power presides !
For, as sweet Luna brings the spell-bound tides,
Though hurricanes to drive them up would fail,—
A high, bright, gentle Presence doth avail,
Where stern commands would ineffectual be,
To draw these myriads—a resistless sea,
Against whose force all barriers prove too frail.
See how each eager wavelet lifts its face,
Agleam with light, to snatch a loving glance !
She looking down, beholds her smile of grace
Reflected sparkling from the whole expanse :
And all this ocean's rushing voices rise,
To tell its charmed excitement to the skies.

LOYAL SYMPATHY.

December 1861.

To what new height and depth the love has grown,
Which Britain's stricken Sovereign attends !
"Ah, could we cheer thee!" "could we make amends!"
Sigh millions impotently round her throne.
Judge of the Heart Almighty by your own,
O yearning souls of all her subject friends !
God's love grows tenderer for the grief He sends :
The blow which seems to bid her stand alone,
With cares so great on her frail shoulder laid,
Hath made our cherished Queen that sacred thing,
For which, with promise of support and aid,
Defence and comfort, all His Scriptures ring :
And if a shadow hath her life o'erspread,
'Twill surely prove the shadow of His wing.

CHRISTMAS

1861.

THE funeral hymns just hushed, still haunt the ear,
When suddenly strikes up the Angels' song !
Amid the darkness, which o'er one heart long
Must brood like night, see Bethlehem's Star appear !
O mourning nation ! from yon stately bier,
Turn to this manger cradle ; hear the bells,
Which scarce for our lost Prince have ceased their
knells,
Ring gladly that the Prince of Peace is here !
Around the deathly drapery are twined
Undying evergreens, to bring to mind
That deathless joy. The news their welcome claim,
Not less, but more, because they find us sad :
'Tis woe and death which make the tidings glad,
That seeing our sore ills, the Healer came.

ROYAL SYMPATHY.

HARTLEY COLLIERY, *January 1862.*

WHEN all the horrors of the pit were known,
Widows and orphans, weeping in despair,
Bewailed a hamlet's manhood, perished there.
Then sounded, breaking silence from the throne,
A sad, sweet voice,—“Your misery is my own ;
With tenderest sympathy its weight I share.”
O orphaned—widowed Sovereign ! by this care,
Thy likeness to our King in heaven is shown,—
Touched with a feeling of the griefs He knows,
And claiming kinship with all mourners here.—
Ah ! could yon curtaining veil one hour unclose,
His human voice would doubtless sound as clear,
Proclaiming that for these, and all man's woes,
His human heart is beating—bleeding near !

BEARING THE CROSS.

CHRIST said, ere yet the thorns had pierced His brow,—
“If any man would my disciple be,
Let him take up his cross and follow me.”
Yet, Lord ! when Thou didst to such burden bow,
Didst Thou not sink ? Are we more strong than Thou ?
Or are we not disciples, e'en though we
On Via Dolorosa faint like Thee ?
Then did not Thy fierce foes relief allow,—
Lessening Thy load ? Art Thou more stern than they ?
Christ's answer seems : ‘They made one bear behind
The lighter end ; and still my followers find,—
Bearing my shame,—my burden lightly weigh.
I go before you, and the heavier share
Of every cross ye feel, Myself I bear.’

MEMBERS OF CHRIST.

MEMBERS of Christ, His Body, flesh, and bone !
Surely He feels your pains, and will take care
For His own sake, ye have no more to bear
Than need requires. What then He may postpone,
Forestall not. To the body is unknown
Its future hurts ; e'en though the mind be 'ware
Of wounds to come, and doth its strength prepare :
Leave then that burden to His thoughts alone.
Yet think not He will spare His flesh all pain.
Ah, no ! but His brave Spirit shall sustain
The trembling members at the time through all
O hands ! that in good deeds His mind fulfil,
O feet ! that walk obedient to His will,
Can ye be also pierced, if love shall call ?

F A I T H.

My Saviour ! hast Thou ever prayed for *me*,
That *my* faith fail not ? then, though all the weight
Of a full heart, which, with its load so great
Of care and sorrow, thereby hangs on Thee,
With ceaseless strain that cord attenuate,—
Though gnawing doubts strive every strand to free,—
And stress of winds thereon perpetual be,—
The bands of life will sooner separate.
And by it Thou wilt draw me to Thy breast,
Where they who enter maimed are rendered whole,
And numbed or throbbing nerves find life and rest,
And deadly faintness doth not touch the soul.
Ah, Saviour ! speak the word that hath avail,
Let not things heavenly, like things earthly, fail !

THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

O MOURNERS! using black to represent
That great, dark Shadow, trackless to your sight,
Whereinto disappeared your hearts' delight,—
What hue would they, who through that mystery went,
Deem best assorted with the strange event?
Say white, which babes wear, new to life and light?
Or rose, which morn wears, when she springs from
night?
Or green, which leaves wear, when the sheath is rent?
Consider; though, indeed, the boundary wall
Hath cast upon this life its brooding shade,—
Which by its height, alas! so broad is made,—
Yet but on one side can the shadow fall;
And on the other strikes the radiant Sun,
Which we shall find there, when the breach is won.

SPIRITS MADE PERFECT.

Dost fear that all the souls which meet in light,
Must be alike, because all blemishless ?
All virtues rounded to one righteousness ?
All colours blended into perfect white ?
Why, that would only bring them to the plight
Of winter trees, scarce differing in the snow ;
And such we are on earth ; we do but show
Like dark, bare, sapless skeletons, (in spite
Of all our waiting buds,) unless comes down
A spotless white robe o'er us, not our own.
But when we come beneath the Sun's full power,
Will not those dormant germs expand and warm,
Till every plant assumes its perfect form,
With individual grace of leaf and flower ?

TREASURES THAT REMAIN.

YE whose bright path of love hath led to woe !
Ye would not surely to the point go back,
Where first your footsteps turned into that track,
To choose another, and escape it so ?
True, if ye had not loved, ye would not know
Your poverty, content in cheerful lack ;
But now ye save rich treasure from the wrack ;
For in your mind doth still an image glow,
Whereof no fate that shrine can disposess,
Transfigured, as in resurrection light,—
And in your heart a melting tenderness,
That keeps it from the touch of hardening blight,—
And in your soul a gleam of distant bliss,
A luminous line along the flats at night.

HOME-SICKNESS.

HOPE not that anything will silence quite
In human souls, that tone, where'er they roam,
Of sadness, their half-conscious sigh for home.
They spring, like sudden river-founts, to light,
All over earth ; yet first, untracked by sight,
From God, as vapours from the sea, they come :
And, having run forth bright and frolicsome,
They flow on all sides, seeking left and right,
For Him, with potent homeward tendency,—
Through fields, o'er rocks, round hills, down glens ;
and rest
Finding with none, keep moaning east and west,
(Unless they freeze,) while seaward still they flee,
“ Oh, where 's our parent Sea ? oh, where 's the Sea ? ”
In tones most urgent when their speed is best.

EXPERIENCE.

YOUTH's heart is like a sunny morning shore,
Whereon we play as children, hearing low
The sound of life's wild sea, advancing slow :
And loud we shout, to see each wave rush o'er
A higher, higher mark, unreach'd before,
And shock its rest with sudden overflow.
Ah ! how those waves all day will come and go,
Roll, and recoil, dragging with fierce uproar
The groaning beach ! But 'neath the evening sky,
Again will sound afar the sea's turmoil ;
While here again we walk, and pensively
Collect the tide-brought shells, a costly spoil ;
And from the horizon spreads the mellow light,
That tells a world of glory out of sight.

HOPE.

At each life's sunrise, rosy hope bestows
Its tint on all things, but 'tis quickly gone ;
Things show true-coloured as the day wears on ;
Some bright, some dull ; but can we e'er suppose
That any hour will bring us back the rose,
Which blushing on our morn's horizon shone ?
Ah, wait till evening ! then behold, anon
That hue lights up again, and fuller glows
Than e'en at dawn ; but now the hope it shows,
Is of another day we shall not see
Till we have slept, yet which its promise throws
Thus up through night, to show how fair 'twill be.
And as earth dims and darkens to the eye,
All glory gathers in that roseate sky.

ASCENSION-DAY.

ESCORTED by the chanting heavenly host,
The Saviour came to earth one wintry night :
Now earth's spring larks, with songs and heavenward
flight,
To attend Him homeward try their uttermost.
He found earth dark and frosty ; but may boast
He leaves her warm and vernal, glad and light.
And now though He is gone, her foliage bright—
Buttercups—bluebells—show she hath not lost.
Nay, we believe, that where He passed from sight,
The wheat still ripened on for Pentecost.
Nature by life and growth still proves Him near :
And so may then the Church. Though Christ ascend,
He lingers ; though in clouds He disappear,
Lo ! He is with her alway, to the end.

ICH DIEN.

“ I AM as he that serves,” did once declare,
The Prince of Heaven, its Sovereign’s first-born Son,
Whose seat is at the right hand of the Throne,
As Heir of all things, till His crown He wear.
The name of servant deigning thus to bear,
Not to be ministered unto, He came,
But minister, and let the lowliest claim
His help. And now the Bride He counts so fair,
In mystic union made with Him joint-heir,
Since He hath chosen her to share His crown,—
Must first espouse this motto as her own,
His service for the coming Kingdom share,
And make its neediest subjects most her care,—
Till raised to sit with Him upon His throne.

NOTES.

Page 31.

"Spes Super Sidera."

It will be observed that this poem is, in outward form, an imitation of Tennyson's "Two Voices."

Pages 35 and 37.

*"Then through the glass, which shows where shine
More myriads, which that eye Divine
May see, though too remote for mine.*

*"Then through the glass, which shows how fine
An eye and touch hath traced each line
Of fairy things, too small for thine."*

See a passage, too long for quotation, on the complementary testimony to God's omniscience furnished by the telescope and microscope, in Dr Chalmers's third *Astronomical Discourse*, on "The Extent of the Divine Condescension."

R

Page 40.

"As sunny Eden saw them first."

"The lily is lovely as when it slept
On the waters of Eden's lake;
The woodbine breathes sweetly as when it crept
In Eden from brake to brake."

From an anonymous little poem, entitled, "The Bright, Bright Flowers."

Page 49.

*"I know a tale which proves the cost
Which He will rather should exhaust
His mines, than let e'en one be lost."*

"Who, rather than lose one solitary world of the myriads He has formed, would lavish all the riches of His beneficence and of His wisdom on the recovery of its guilty population."—See Chalmers's fourth Astronomical Discourse, on "The Knowledge of Man's Moral History in the Distant Places of Creation."

Page 54.

"Such bleeding feet."

Possibly suggested by a sonnet on a print of "The Lost Sheep," by Mary Maynard:—

"Behold her borne
In triumph on his shoulder, high above
The briers and splintery fragments! they may wound
His feet, but *she* is safe."

Page 57.

A Blind Man's Reverie.

This poem was mainly inspired by an idea suggested in conversation—that, as the soul in this fleshly state is brought immediately face to face with physical things and impressions, so, in the disembodied state it may be brought into immediate contact with spiritual things and impressions; and in the resurrection state have the best of both.

Page 81.

*"The flowers, and butterflies no less,
Arrived at nuptial prime,
Blazed forth in splendid bridal dress."*

"See how the plant at its nuptial hour adorns itself with bright flowers, exhaling sweet odour,—how the butterfly spreads its painted wings."—See Grindon's "Life: its Nature, Varieties, and Phenomena," a footnote in the thirteenth chapter. Also a quotation from Dr Laycock in another note at the end of the volume—"The gay attire of the lover, and the glories of bridal dress and decoration, are but evolutions of the same great idea."

Page 89.

*"And on the cheeks of those who wept,
The cold drops mingled with the warm."*

Written before the publication of "Enoch Arden," &c, which contains, in "Aylmer's Field," the lines—

*"Tears, and the careless rain of heaven, mixt
Upon their faces," &c.*

Page 107.

*"For whence beside could bulb or seed
Its quickened life derive?
All hail the tiniest springing rill,
Which shows life's Fountain flowing still."*

See No. VII. of a poem on "Mary Magdalene," in "The Three Wakings, with Hymns and Songs:"—

*"Yet not one leaf-blade ever stirred,
Bursting earth's wintry dungeons dim,
But lived at His creative word,
Responsive to the life in Him."*

“ Since, then, the life that He bestows,
 Thus triumphs over death and earth,
 What power of earth or death can close
 The Fountain whence all life has birth ? ”

Page 108.

*“ Ah ! thus,—that deep sleep being past,
 Whereinto He for her was cast,
 The second Adam clasps His Bride,
 Formed from Him, to His wounded side,
 Which gave her life.”*

See Scott's Commentary on Eph. v. 32, 33. “The following quotation gives the substance of ancient and modern expositions of the passage in this particular :—“Adam, in whom the whole human race began, was a natural image of Christ, in whom the human race was to be restored : and his deep sleep, the opening of his side, and the formation of Eve from a rib taken out of his side, were fit emblems of Christ's death, of the opening of His side on the cross, and of the regeneration of believers by His death. The love which Adam expressed towards Eve, and his union with her by marriage, were lively emblems of Christ's love to believers, and His eternal union with them in one society after the resurrection.”—*Macknight.*”

Page 109.

*“ And things which had last season crept
 Along the earth, and ate and slept,” &c.*

The writer was early taught to regard the caterpillar, chrysalis, and butterfly, as a threefold type of earthly life, death, and resurrection ; an analogy which better harmonizes nature and Christian truth than that drawn by the ancients ; who, knowing no resurrection, took cognisance only of the insect's last transformation, as setting forth the escape of the Psyche at death.

Page 115.

*" And marks inscribed above it set,
Whereon its name and sort were shown."*

This comparison is the unpublished thought of a friend.

Page 121.

*" My soul will be with thine all night ;
And from its visions of delight,
I shall not in the darkness wake."*

" Her body has been laid down to sleep ; but her mind, her spirit, is flying away in beautiful dreams. She never feels at all that she is lying in her grave under the ground."—*Miss Mulock's " Olive."*

Page 121.

*" Each weekly morning of the Sun
Shall mind me of that sun-like One," &c.*

The idea of associating the name of Sunday with the rising of Christ as a Sun, was suggested by the following words at the opening of Dr Hessey's second Bampton Lecture, on " Sunday: "—" It is very early in the morning, the first day of the week. The sun has risen. The Sun of Righteousness has risen also."

Page 160.

" And taking by-lanes for the King's highway."

" I may be as anxious to recall you to the ancient and only road, as you are to teach me your new by-ways to Paradise.—*Sir Walter Scott's " Abbot,"* ch. xxv.

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Page 163.

*“ Was not the sharpest pang of all that pain
The agonising thought,
How few would e’er the inheritance attain
That was so dearly bought ? ”*

This sentiment was once uttered by a Roman Catholic preacher in a Good Friday sermon, at Moorfields, London.

Page 164.

*“ I cannot through this cloud the light descry ;
I cannot all things prove ;
I may not doubt the Church, which says they die ;
I may not doubt Thy love.
So, Lord ! forgive this busy throbbing brain,
And keep my heart sincere ;
That I may soon in heaven that light attain
Which maketh all things clear. ”*

These lines are a faint echo of the following :—“ God rest his soul ! and yet why do I pray thus ? Surely if he died so, he must have been at rest these many years. Yet the decrees of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and the Vicar of Christ on earth ! God help me ! I am a poor old man, and my brain is sorely confused at times. . . . O blessed Lord Jesus ! I am a weary old man, sorely tired with this burden of life ; wilt Thou not soon say, ‘ Come to me,’ for Thou knowest I need rest ? ”—See “ *Extracts from the Diary of Brother Bartholomew,* ” in “ *Tales and Sketches of Christian Life.* ”

Page 197.

“ The Prayer of all Nations. ”

A little book, called, “ The Royal Exchange and the Palace of Industry,” by Rev. Thomas Binney, describes all nations as being “ representatively present ” in the persons of their ambassadors, while prayer was offered in their name at the opening of the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Page 199.

*"A princely spirit meditated,—
'And must they live, and grow, and work,'"* &c.

See Prince Albert's speech at the Mansion-house, March 21, 1851.

Page 208.

"Faith bears her up on eagle wings, bold Hallelujahs shouting."

"The tremendous declarations of faith, where the voices, soaring upwards, scale by scale, convey an idea of limitless aspiration, in the 'Hallelujah.'"—*Times*, May 2, 1862.

Page 211.

*"And though thy sun has sunk at noon, thy day to twilight turning
Songs to laments, this second feast of nations into mourning."*

See Amos viii. 9, 10, the text of a funeral sermon on Prince Albert.

Page 233.

The sonnet, "Winter and Spring," is similar in idea to, and perhaps partly suggested by, one commencing: "And weep not, though the beautiful decay," which prefaces the 3d part of "Within and Without," by George MacDonald. The first line, "*Yet is of winter, as of summer, need,*" may be an unconscious echo of "*Ah God! we need the winter as the spring,*" from "*A Hidden Life,*" by the same author.

Page 237.

"On Reading 'The Saint's Tragedy.'"

"Why, with remorseless knife
Home to the stem, prune back each bough and bud?
I thought the task of education was
To strengthen, not to crush; to train and feed
Each subject toward fulfilment of its nature,
According to the mind of God."

See Act iv., Scene 1, of *The Saint's Tragedy*, by Rev. Charles Kingsley.

Page 242.

*" See how each eager wavelet lifts its face,
Agleam with light, to snatch a loving glance."*

Written long after reading, and with no remembrance of, the following lines in Alexander Smith's " Life Drama," Scene iv. :--

" If ye are fair,
Mankind will crowd around you thick, as when
The full-faced moon sits silver on the sea ;
The eager waves lift up their gleaming heads,
Each shouldering for her smile."

Page 252.

' Home-sickness."

The idea, or at least the imagery, of this sonnet was suggested by the following stanza, by Jacqueline Pascal :—

" As waterfalls, and rills,
And streams, wind past the hills,
In steady progress toward their parent sea,
So these, my simple lays,
Careless of all men's praise,
Find their way home, O Source Divine, to Thee."

Page 256.

" Ich Dien."

" The lonely glory of a throne -
May yet this lowly joy preserve ;
Love may make that a stepping-stone,
And raise ' I reign ' into ' I serve.' "

See a little poem, called " Ministry," headed with Matt. xx. 28, in " The Three Wakings, with Hymns and Songs."

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Page 54.

"But who may say with what fond grace," &c.

This and the two following stanzas probably owe something to these lines, ascribed to Beddoes in Lynch's first essay on "Forms of Literature :"—

"Ah! were there but few,
Who, watching the slow lighting up of stars,
Lonely at eve, like seamen sailing near
Some island city where their dearest dwell,—
Cannot but guess in sweet imagining,

Which light is glittering from their loved one's home."

Page 68.

"Ah! will not, too, some longing rise," &c.

This stanza, and more remotely, the following one, owe some inspiration to a passage in George MacDonald's "Prayer for the Past."

Page 114.

"Had looked in through their lattice."

It appears that the "looketh forth at" of Canticles ii. 9, might better have been rendered simply "looketh through." The Scripture quotations and allusions here abounding, do not however all follow what, it seems, is the sense of the original, or the translated text, and are not necessarily offered as interpretations.

Page 119.

*"I sent each spring with promises
That I would yet make all things new."*

Adapted from the following translation of two lines in a German Easter hymn :—

*"He bids the spring each year proclaim
That He will soon make all things new."*

Page 143.

*"It was not thou who didst my word gainsay;
The laws I gave to thee were all obeyed,
When on thine innocence my curse I laid."*

See the wail of the Earth-spirit in Mrs Browning's "Drama of Exile:"—

*"I had no part in your transgression—none!
My roses on the bough did bud not pale—
My rivers did not loiter in the sun:
I was obedient. Wherefore, in my centre,
Do I thrill at this curse of death and winter!"*

Two or three very slight obligations, if not others, might still be traced.

Page 246.

*"They made one bear behind
The lighter end."*

This supposition, though countenanced by Luke xxiii. 26, (comp. John xix. 17,) is by no means proved; it is even debated whether more than the transverse beam of the cross was carried on such occasions at all. The statement referred to is therefore intended rather suggestively than positively; in common with others in this volume, which may bear (with reference to the context) even more distinctly the form of assertion.

THE END.

